BEDIRXAN PASHAZADES

POWER RELATIONS AND NATIONALISM (1876-1914)

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Thesis Abstract

Yener Koç; "Bedirxan Pashazades: Power Relations and Nationalism (1876-1914)"

By focusing on the political and cultural activities of a family known as Bedirxan Pashazades during the era of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) and Second Constitutional Period (1908-1914), this thesis problematizes whether the clashes and opposition of the Kurdish elites against the Ottoman state had a nationalist character or not. Bedirxan Pashazades are the family members of Bedirxan Beg, whose emirate of Cizre and Bohtan was eliminated with the Tanzimat implementations, and thereafter who lived in exile in the western parts of the empire. Most of the Bedirxan Pashazades approached to the Young Turks both practically and ideologically during the reign of Abdulhamid II and saw the solution of the problems of the Kurds and empire in the unity of elements and restoration of Constitution. Although they maintained such inclinations during the early years of the 1908 Revolution, after the consolidation of the power of the Committee of Union and Progress, the centralist and ever-increasing Turkist policies of it led the family members to join the opposition in different wings. Some of them while keeping their Ottomanist inclination, saw the solution in the liberal, decentralist and anti-Unionist path of the Liberal Entente. However, some others chose a pro-separatist politics. Nevertheless, the motivations behind Kurdish nationalism in the late Ottoman period cannot be reduced to the state policies. As will be discussed, most of the family members not only followed western movements of thoughts, but also observed the dynamics and demands and were influenced from practices and discourse in the Armenian, Albanian and Arab societies within the empire.

On the one hand this study shows the transformations and changes in the ideology and identity of the Kurdish elites in the longue durée (1876-1914), on the other hand it elaborates how the demands of the Kurdish intellectuals, political activists and notables were heterogeneous and fragmented, and how it is difficult to define their movement/s with the terms of 'Ottomanism,' 'Kurdish nationalism,' and 'cultural nationalism.'

Tez Özeti

Yener Koç; “Bedirhan Paşazadeler, İktidar İlişkileri ve Milliyetçilik (1876-1908)”

Bu tez, II Abdülhamit (1876-1909) ve II Meşrutiyet (1908-1914) dönemlerinde Bedirhan Paşazadeler olarak bilinen bir ailenin politik ve kültürel faaliyetlerine odaklanarak, mezkûr zaman zarfında Kürt ileri gelenleri ile Osmanlı Devleti arasında yaşanan çatışmaların miliyetçi bir karaktere sahip olup olmadıklarını sorgulamaktadır. Bedirhan Paşazadeler, Tanzimat uygulamalarıyla birlikte varlığına son verilen Cizre ve Bohtan emiri Bedirhan Bey’in, impratorluğun batı topraklarında, sürgünde, yaşayan aile bireyleridir. Bedirhan Paşazadeler, II. Abdulhamid döneminde, pratik ve ideolojik anlamda “Jön Türk” hareketi ile yakınlaşmış ve İmparatorluğun ve Kürtlerin sorunlarının çözümünü Osmanlılık kimliğinin özümsenmesi ve Meşrutiyet’in iadesi ile sağlanabileceğine inanmışlardır. 1908 Devrimi’nin ilk yıllarında bu temayüllerini devam ettirmelerine karşın, İttihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti’nin iktidarının perçinleşmesinin ardından, oldukça merkeziyetçi ve giderek artan Türkçü politikalarının aile bireylerini farklı kanatlarda muhalefete sevk etmiştir. Kimileri Osmanlıcı eğilimlerini muhâfaza etmelerine karşın çözümü Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası gibi liberal, adem-i merkeziyetçi ve anti-i İttihatcı bir yolda ararlarken, kimileri ise ayrılma taraftarı bir siyasete yönelmiştir. Tabi ki geç Osmanlı dönemi Kürt milliyetçiliğinin motivasyonlarını sadece devlet politikalarına indirgemek doğru olmaz. Görüleceği üzere çoğu aile bireyleri Batı’nın fikir akımlarını takip etmekle beraber, İmparatorluk içerisinde Ermeni, Arnavut ve Arab toplumlarında dinamikleri ve talepleri gözlemlemiş onlardan pratik ve söylem bağlamında etkilenmişlerdir.

Bu tez bir taraftan uzen süreli ideoloji ve kimlik alanlarındaki değişimlere ve dönüşümlere odaklanırken diğer taraftan da 19. yy sonları ile 20. yy başlarında Kürt aydın, politik aktivist ve ileri gelenlerin taleplerinin ne derece heterojen ve parçalı olduğuna, ve mezkûr zaman zarfında var olan hareketi/leri “Osmanlıcılık” “Kürt milliyetçiliği” veya “Kültürel milliyetçilik” gibi terimler ile ifâde etmenin zorluklarına değinmektedir.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The "Kurdish question", as a historical issue, has been generally regarded as a "problem" which emerged in the Turkish Republic. The emergence of Kurdish nationalism also has been considered as a response to the transition from a multi-cultural, decentralist empire to a modern nation-state which is based on Turkish identity.[1] The removal of the caliphate, the Turkification policies of Turkish Republic, the emphasis on the Turkish identity and denial of the Kurds have been seen as the main motivations of the politization of the Kurdish identity.[2] It is thus generally accepted that major Kurdish uprisings - like Sheikh Said (1925) and Ağrı (1930) – were outcomes of this policy. These uprisings with their national tones have been regarded as reactions to the asimiliationist and centralist policies of the Kemalist regime. There is also a growing literature about "Kurdish nationalism" about the late Ottoman era which questions the dynamics, motivations and participants with different approaches and methodologies. This thesis is among one of these attempts which aims to search the origins of the Kurdish nationalism in the late Ottoman Era. It aims to present the nature and discourse of the clashes and conciliations that existed between Kurdish notables and the Ottoman state between the years 1876 and 1914. In other words, it intends to discuss whether the clashes of the Kurdish notables with state had a nationalist character or not.

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[1] Mustafa Akyol, "The Origin of Turkey's Kurdish Question: An Outcome of the Breakdown of the Ottoman *Ancien Regime*" (MA, Boğaziçi University, 2006).

[2] Hamit Bozarslan, "Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contrat to Rebellion (1919-1925)," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda 2003).

The relations, clashes and conciliations of the Kurdish notables with the state during the late Ottoman era (1876-1908) will be analyzed by focusing on a Kurdish family known as Bedirxan Pashazades. They are like 'Azimzades of Syria, Frasheris of Albania, who had a key role in the politics of their community and contributed a lot to the development of Kurdish culture, literacy and politics in the late Ottoman and early Republican era. This thesis, by analyzing political and cultural activities of the family members, aims to answer some questions related to the early Kurdish nationalism. First, what was the nature of the reactions of the Kurdish notables to the oppressive policies of the Abdulhamid II and of central and "colonial" aspects of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)? Did such policies trigger politization of the Kurdish identity or not? That is to say, to what extent Kurdish notables remained loyal to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and to the idea of the Ottomanism? Moreover what were the reasons of ruptures between and disaffection among Kurdish notables and Ottoman State?

Historians tend to analyze the development of Kurdish nationalism through dividing it into certain stages[3] or they are inclined to make a distinction between the nationalism of the late Ottoman era and that of Republican Turkey by representing the former as cultural the latter as political one.[4] Recent studies also argue that Kurdish elite kept their Ottomanness until the end of the empire and became as full-

[3] For example; according to Robert Olson there are four stages of Kurdish nationalsim. The 1st stage begin with Sheikh Ubeydullah Movement and ends with his death in 1883. The 2nd stage begin with the establishment of the Hamidian Regiments in 1891 continues until the outbreak of the WWI. The 3rd stage covers the period between WWI (1914) and Treaty of Serves (10 August 1920). And the 4th one covers the postwar developments through the rebellion of Sheikh Said. See: Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), p. 1.

On the other hand; M. Hakan Yavuz, explains the development of Kurdish nationalism in five stages. M. Hakan Yavuz, "Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalsim in Turkey," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001).

[4] Hamit Bozarslan, "Kürt Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Milliyetçilik*, ed. Murat Belge (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).

fledged Kurdish nationalists during and especially after the First World War (WWI).[5] This thesis, by focusing on Bedirxan Pashazades in the late Ottoman era, argues that although the oppressive policies of the Hamidian era (1876-1908) triggered Kurdish intellectuals to collaborate with the Young Turks and empowered their ties with Ottomanism, centralist and the "colonialist" aspects of the CUP government (1908-1914), which allowed no political space to the Kurdish notables, had created a social discontent which in time turned and expressed within nationalist discourses by the notables and intellectuals of the Kurdish community. Thus this study argues that political claims were also the case besides the cultural ones even before the 1918. Thus this thesis tries to show the impossibility of drawing a "monolithic national movement or identity", like "Kurdish nationalism," "Kurdish cultural nationalism" or "Ottomanism" during the late Ottoman era. Rather than presenting a monolithic movement, it focuses on the heterogeneity of the claims. However it does not reduce the motivations of early Kurdish nationalism (both cultural and political) solely to the state policies. As appreciated it was an age of nationalism and this was highly felt. Thus the influences of enlightenment, the national movements in the empire like the ones of Albanians and Armenians, are some other factors that this thesis takes into consideration while examining the early Kurdish nationalism.

In relation of this point, it is also hard to make a sharp periodization of the early Kurdish national movement since there are several "cases of exceptions" in the activities and discourses of the Kurdish activists and since their demands and political actions were varied from one individual/group/region to another one even in the family of Bedirxan Pashazades who actively participated in the late Ottoman

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[5] Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of Newyork Press, 2004). and Djene Rhys Bajalan, *Jön Kürtler Birinci Dünya Savaşından Önce Kürt Hareketi* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2010).

"Kurdish movement." As going to be discussed in the second chapter and exemplified in the third and especially forth chapters in a more detailed way, the early Kurdish nationalism neither had a linear development nor could be divided into different periods. It was fragmented, discontinuous and heterogeneous in terms of practice and discourse. For instance; although Kurdish intellectuals like Hasan Bedirxan was in favor of an Ottoman Empire with a decentralist administration; Abdurrezzak Bedirxan tried to transform the social disaffection among the Kurdish tribes into a popular Kurdish movement during the Second Constitutional Period. Although other Kurdish intellectuals were not subject matter of this thesis, the same discontinuity, fragmentation, heterogeneity can also be seen among them.

Because of the importance of the Bedirxan Pashazades in the politics of the Empire and their role in the development of the early Kurdish nationalism, they have been mentioned in several studies in and out of academia. Especially the Revolt of Bedirxan Beg (1846) has been subject of several studies.[6] However, Malmisanij's book *Cizira Botanlı Bedirxaniler ve Bedirxani Ailesi Derneğinin Tutanakları*[7] is the only book which scrutinizes Bedirxan Pashazades as a family. Although, this work contains very valuable information about the family members and based on several sources, due to the methodology used (as a monographic study it is based on each family member's life), it does not pay attention to the transformations and changes that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which not only effected Ottoman Empire but also the family members. Moreover**,** the lack of

[6] Mehmet Alagöz, "Old Habits Die Hard, a Reaction to the Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt" (MA, Boğaziçi University, 2003)., Fatih Gençer, "Merkeziyetçi İdari Düzenlemeler Bağlamında Bedirhan Bey Olayı" (PHD, Ankara University, 2010)., Ahmet Kardam, *Cizre - Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan : Direniş Ve İsyan Yılları* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2011).

[7] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları* (Sweden Apec, 1994).

Ottoman sources made the work partial and limits the information about the relations of the family members with the state and also with the Kurdish population. There is also some misinformation in the book which is going to be mentioned when needed. For instance the author mentions two revolts that were led by the Bedirxani family in 1898 and 1912 which actually never happened.[8] Probably the court of 1898 and the election campaign of 1912 were regarded as "revolts" due to the inaccessibility of the related sources at the time when the book was written. Moreover, the author generally regarded family members as "Kurdish nationalists" and neither takes into consideration their "Ottoman" and "Islamic" identities nor their negotiations with the Ottoman state. However Malmisanij's book is crucially important since he not only introduces detailed family tree of the Bedirxan Pashazades but also gives important information about all the members of the family through searching a rich literature.

Another Kurdish historian Celilê Celîl, who worked several years as the head of Kurdology Department of the Academy of Sciences in Soviet Russia, pays attention to the role of the family members in the emergence of the Kurdish nationalism. Celîl, in his work *Kurdish Enlightenment* [*Kürt Aydınlanması*] from a Marxian point of view argues that late Ottoman Kurdish intellectuals including Bedirxan Pashazades were heavily influenced by bourgeoisie - liberal ideas of the western ideology and thought.[9] He also defines Young Turks as proponents of the bourgeois democratic thought who fought to overthrow feudal oppressor, namely Abdulhamid II.[10] According to him, Kurdish independence movement was born when the feudal character of the Empire was begun to disintegrate. He highlights the

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[8] Ibid., pp. 169, 211.

[9] Celîlê Celîl, *Kürt Aydınlanması* (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2000) pp. 24,64.

[10] Ibid., p. 14.

relations of the Kurdish intellectuals like Abdurrahman Bedirxan with the Young Turks. According to him, the close relationship of the Kurdish intellectuals with the Young Turks was shaped by practical reasons.[11] Although Celîl highly emphasizes Bedirxan Pashazade's contribution to the Kurdish identity, culture and literature and their role in the Kurdish national movement, he disregards those intellectuals' strong ties with Ottomanism.

Mehmed Emin Zeki (1880-1948) who is an earlier Kurdish historian, in his book *Well-Known Personas of the Kurds and Kurdistan* (*Meşahir-i Kurd û Kurdistan*) presents some portraits of Bedirxan Pashazades from the late Ottoman era. In their short biographies Bedirxan Pasha and Osman Bedirxan are represented as Kurdish nationalists who aimed to establish an independent Kurdish state. Both the revolt of the Bedirxan Pasha (1846) and the revolt of 1878 are mentioned as national revolts.[12]

Other than such studies which regard late Ottoman Kurdish intellectuals as nationalists without further scrutiny, Hakan Özoğlu, in his book, *Kurdish notables and the Ottoman State*, argues that "the children and grandchildren of Bedirxan Pasha committed themselves to Kurdish nationalism only after the World War I, when the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist."[13] According to Özoğlu, like most of the Kurdish intellectuals of the time Bedirxan Pashazades kept their Ottoman identity and remained loyal to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire until WWI. All activities of the family members, including publishing newspapers, establishing clubs and schools were regarded as cultural activities. Özoğlu mostly focused on Mehmed

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[11] Ibid., p. 35.

[12] Mehmed Emin Zeki, *Meşahir-ı Kurd Û Kurdistan* (Spaga Apec & Öz-GE Yayınarı, 1998).

[13] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 103.

Emin (1851-1926), Celadet Ali (1893-1951) and Kamuran Bedirxan (1895-1971) who actually became politically active towards the end of the WWI. However he does not pay enough attention to the other family members like Abdurrezzak, Yusuf Kamil and Hüseyin Bedirxan who were politically active during the Second Constitutional era and followed a different policy regarding their community and engaged in several clashes with the Ottoman State.

After this review of literature I want to corroborate my position with a few points. First of all, this study is not a monographic account of each family member, but it aims to show some new insights about the nature and the discourse of their clashes with the Ottoman state and their changing identities. Because of the scope of the thesis, it is impossible to focus on each biography of the Bedirxan Pashazade members. Instead, this study focuses on some outstanding figures who were influential in the mentioned period. This thesis does not regard the Bedirxan Pashazades as a monolithic entity. Although they shared many common points like opposition to the Hamidian rule, expectations from the Constitutional Government, or the wish to return Cezire and Bohtan, they were not a homogeneous family in terms of their political alliances, practices, and ways of contentions. As will be shown in third chapter, although Abdurrezzak Bedirxan tried to win the support of Kurdish tribes against the Hamidian rule by establishing micro alliances at the Ottoman-Iranian border, Abdurrahman Bedirxan criticized the Hamidian despotism through his publications from Cairo and Paris. There were also ideological and political differences which mostly revealed itself during the Second Constitutional era. Although some of them (like Mikdat Midhat Bedirxan) stressed the importance of Ottomanness, others like Abdurrezzak Bedirxan worked to form an independent Kurdish state during the Second Constitutional era.

The Second Chapter of this thesis, mainly deals with the developments and transformations that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century Ottoman Kurdistan by defining basic concepts like "tribe," "tribal confederation," "emirate," "sheikh," "agha" and "intelligentsia" which are peculiar to the nineteenth century Kurdish culture, society and economy. After mentioning the elimination of the semi independent Kurdish emirates by the Ottoman Empire, this chapter will focus on how the Tanzimat State attempted to penetrate into the eastern provinces by using its *despotic power* and *infrastructural power*, by giving particular examples from different regions. How centralization attempts of the state were interpreted by the local authorities and in response what kind of relationships were developed with the local authorities? The second part of this chapter is also a critique of the studies on early Kurdish nationalism. It questions and discusses certain approaches to the emergence and nature of the early Kurdish nationalism. In this chapter it is argued that rather than a sharp periodization of the early Kurdish nationalism into different stages, the heterogeneity, discontinuity, the fluctuations – which were the results of rapid political changes, transformations and power politics – should be taken into consideration.

The third Chapter discusses the social, economic and political positions of the Bedirxan Pashazades in the Hamidian Era (1876-1908). Moreover their early struggle against the Hamidian regime is analyzed by focusing on certain cases like the Revolt of 1878 and the clashes with the Hamidian Regiments. All of these cases are regarded as the results of Bedirxan Pashazades desire to revive the Cezire and Bohtan Emirate which was dissolved by the Ottoman Empire during the early years of the Tanzimat era. That is to say, these attempts were determined to reestablish Bedirxan Pashazades power networks in the region. This chapter also pays attention

to the rapprochement of the family members like Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat, Osman Pasha and Mehmed Salih Bedirxan to the Young Turks, their involvement in Committee of Union and Progress and their struggle against the Hamidian regime.

The fourth chapter deals with the political and cultural activities of the family members following the years after 1908 Revolution. It firstly gives brief information on the CUP's policy towards the Kurdish region, than the response of urban settled Kurdish intellectuals and regional tribal leaders to the Constitutional rule. Then, the return of the Bedirxan Pashazade Hüseyin, Hasan, Midhat, Yusuf Kamil and Süleyman Bedirxan to the Cezire and Bohtan and their engagement in the politics of the region is analyzed through focusing on the elections of 1912, Armenian Reform debates (1912-1914), Bitlis Revolt (1914) and effects of approaching WWI. The parts about the CUP's Kurdish policy, the elections of 1912, and the Armenian reform debates show how the Bedirxan Pashazades (who during the Hamidian era supported the CUP) became disaffected with CUP policy. Contrary to the Hamidian era, CUP's attempts to establish a direct rule in the region and to break the power of the local authorities resulted in the emergence of new political alliances, collaborations and oppositions in Kurdish society. The Bedirxan Pashazades as a new power in the region engaged in and also benefited from this new political atmosphere to a great extent. That is to say this chapter focuses on how the centralization policies of the CUP government and the exclusion of the Kurdish notables from the political sphere triggered the politization of the Kurdish identity and led intellectuals and political activists to seek different alliances, like collaboration with liberal circles or secessionism.

This thesis is mostly based on Ottoman archival documents. There are several documents in the Ottoman archives which provide valuable information about the

social, economic and political positions of the Bedirxan Pashazades. Especially DH.SYS (Dahiliye Siyasi) and DH.ŞFR (Dahiliye Şifre) collections contain several reports about political activities of the family members. Other than bureaucratic papers, there are several letters written by them to the tribal leaders which were captured by the local forces. Yet, using Ottoman archives has also its shortcomings. Bureaucratic papers do not always provide the motivations of a social movement or any kind of political action. State officials or local governors in the second half of the nineteenth century describe any kind of social movement in the Kurdish region as "*gaile*" (trouble), "*tasallut*", (disturbance) "*mefsedet*" (malice), "*iğtişaş*" (disorder). Such words limit our knowledge about the motivations of the social disaffections against the state. But at the turn of the twentieth century such words were gradually replaced by *ihtilâl (*insurrection*)*, *protesto (*protest*)*, *nümayiş (*demonstration*)*. Charles Tilly argues that "words such as "protest", "disturbance", "disorder", "terrorism" and even "violence" do not stand for coherent social realities." According to him "such words designate the attitudes of observers – especially authorities, rivals, and enemies – to actions which they disapprove."[14] Most of the reports or telegraphs that were prepared or sent by the local governors or officials during the late Ottoman era depicted the activities of the Kurdish intellectuals or Kurdish tribes as "disorder," "disturbance" or "trouble." However, the petitions, Kurdish journals, letters enable us to make a comparison between different sources and to learn the claims of the subjects.

[14] Charles Tilly, "European Violance and Collective Action since 1700," in *Political Violance and Terrorism* (Istituto Carlo Cattaneo Bologna: June 1982), p. 1.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter after explaining basic concepts related to nineteenth century Kurdish region will discuss certain approaches to the emergence of early Kurdish nationalism. In order to understand the inner dynamics of the early Kurdish "national movement," it is necessary to provide an account of social, religious, economic groups that existed in the nineteenth century Ottoman Kurdistan. Since social reality of the nineteenth century Ottoman Kurdistan, cannot be handled without mentioning the role of the state, this chapter will also focus on the state building process of the Tanzimat state in the eastern *vilâyets* of the empire by giving particular examples from the region.

'Tribe,' 'Tribal Confederation' and 'Emirate'

Basic concepts like 'tribe,' 'tribal confederation,' 'emirate' need to be defined since they were peculiar social, economical, religious and political organizations of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century and will be used in this thesis frequently. The concepts in English like 'tribe' and its subdivisions 'clan' do not always correspond to what really exists in Ottoman Kurdistan.[15] The complex structure of the Kurdish tribal network, fast transformations they experienced in terms of size and structure, alliances that they established with other tribes and with "governing" states

[15] Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), pp. 59-60. See also; Lois Beck, "The Tribes and the State in Nineteeth and Twentieth - Century Iran " in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (Berkley, Losangles, Oxford: University of California Press 1990), p. 187.

make it hard to make a clear definition of the tribe. According to Martin Van Bruinessen "a Kurdish tribe is a socio-political and generally also territorial (and therefore economic) unit based on descent and kinship, real or putative with a characteristic internal structure. It is naturally divided into a number of sub-tribes, each in turn again divided into smaller units; clans, lineages, etc."[16] In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of the Ottoman Empire, the terms like *aşîret, (plural; aşâir), tâife, kabîle* and *(plural; kabâil)* were used by the Ottoman bureaucracy corresponding to 'tribe' 'sub-tribe' or 'clan.' It seems that while referring to a particular Kurdish 'tribe' and 'sub-tribe,' Ottoman local administration did not use the above-mentioned terms arbitrarily. They made a logical division while talking about a tribe, a sub-tribe or a household. For instance, the Şikaki Confederation consists of several sub-tribes like Hafiris and Halofis in varying size and structure; and while referring to the Şikaki at the Ottoman – Iranian border, the governor of the region used the word *aşîret,* and while referring to a sub-tribe of it, to Halofis, used the word *tâife,* and finally, while referring to another sub-tribe, to Hafiris, he used the word *kabîle.*[17] Other than bureaucratic papers, it is also important to see how a particular tribe was defined by a tribal member. The petitions and telegraphs written from the Kurdish region by the local population had great importance in understanding the tribal landscape since most of them were signed with the title of the signer. For instance in a telegram dated to 1913, the sender signed document as "Karçikan clan of Pencaran tribe, the leader of a hundred households" *(Pencaran Aşîretinin Karçikan Kabîlesi, Yüz Hane Reisi).*[18]Partially, this "title" portrays the

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[16] Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 51.

[17] BOA, DH.MKT, 2132/106 (27.C.1316)

structure of a Kurdish tribe settled in Cezire and Bohtan. It is understood that Pencaran tribe consisted of sub-tribes (*kabîle*) and those *kabîle*s again consisted of households (*hane*).

'Tribal confederation' and 'tribe,' although the former is a larger political organization, resemble each other in terms of structure and organization. A tribal confederation consists of more than one tribe (just as a tribe may consist of more than one "clan" or "sub-tribe"). For instance the Ertoşi confederation, which spread to a vast area, consisted of several tribes like Sharafhan, Jıriki, Mamreş or Ezdinan.[19] Madawi al Rasheed argues that in most of the tribal confederations in central Arabia there was "often a core and a periphery."[20] The same is also true for the Kurdish tribes. As in the case of the Şikaki confederation, the Abdovi tribe was at the core of it and was influential in taking decisions related to the future of the confederation.[21] At times of crisis (like in the case of state intervention) the peripheral tribes were more likely to separate from the confederation.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tribes were the most influential socio-political organizations of the Kurdish settled regions. However before the second half of the nineteenth century Ottoman Kurdistan was ruled by several semi-independent emirates. That does not mean that there were no tribes. As Hamit Bozarslan rightly points out "the tribes were there but until the second half of the nineteenth century they seem rather to have a subordinate position in power

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[18] BOA, DH.SYS, 100/4 (1331.8.4)

[19] Mark Sykes, *The Caliph's Heritage a Short History of the Turkish Empire,* (Newyork: Arno Press, 1973), p. 565.

[20]Madawi al - Rasheed, "Tribal Confederations and Emirates in Central Arabia," in *Tribes and Power, Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, ed. Hosham Dawod Falah A. Jabar (London: SAQI, 2003), p. 214.

[21] Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran: The Case of Simko's Revolt," in *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Richard Tapper (London: 1983), , p. 386.

relations."[22] However, what had led to the proliferation and consolidation of the tribes was directly related with centralization attempts of the Tanzimat state.

As Lois Beck argues tribes were not static entities, they were historically and situationally dynamic entities.[23] For the well being of the tribe, tribal leaders could easily make alliances with the other tribes. For the protection of their tribe or in order to solve the inter-tribal conflicts, they also appealed to state intervention. This was also the case for the Kurdish tribes. There are several petitions written by the tribal leaders demanding state intervention into their inter-tribal conflicts. More importantly, tribes which were settled at the border could easily change their political positions. At the time of state interventions (like centralization, reform, displacement) they appealed to other states for the well being of their tribes. Kurdish tribes located at the border, with their manpower, were always seen as supplementary forces during the times of war by surrounding states. Throughout the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, Russians, Ottomans and Persians tried to take the support of the Kurdish tribes in times of war. Pyotr Ivanovic Averyanov, a Russian Lieutenant in 1900, shows how the Ottoman Empire and Russia cared about gaining the support of the Kurdish tribes located at the border during the wars between the Russia and Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.[24]

Although *Emirates* resembled tribal confederations, they also differed at some points. They were also composed of a number of tribes. At the top of the *emirate* there was a *mîr*, who was different from tribal leaders, said to have a prestigious

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[22]Hamit Bozarslan, "Tribal Asabbiya and Kurdish Politics; a Socio-Historical Perspective " in *The Kurds, Nationalism and Politics*, ed. Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London, San Francisco, Beirut: SAQI, 2006), p.134.

[23] Beck, "The Tribes and the State in Nineteeth and Twentieth - Century Iran ", p. 190.

[24] P. İ. Averyanov, *19. Yüyzılda Osmanlı İran Rus Savaşlarında Kürtler*, trans. İbrahim Kale (Istanbul: Avesta, 2010).

descent.[25] An *emirate*, like a state had a standing army and a court and could also mobilize tribal militias in time of need.[26] For instance the Cezire and Bohtan *emirate* was ruled by the Bedirxan Beg (1836-1847) before its elimination by the Tanzimat state. Actually Bedirxan Beg was not coming from a powerful tribe. He belonged to a tribe called *Azizan* who were said to be descendents of the Arab commander Halid bin Velid.[27] Tribes had such myths of origin. Halid bin Velid as a commander of the Muslim army in seventh century might be regarded as a prestigious descent. (The account of Cezire and Bohtan Emirate will be mentioned in the Third Chapter)

Before the mid of the nineteenth century Bohtan, Baban and Soran were the most influential Kurdish *emirates* located in Ottoman Kurdistan. Such emirates as semi-independent entities, also acted as a part (not always) of the Ottoman administration. For instance Baban was not only an emirate with its own army and court but also was a province (*Sancak*) of the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the leader of the Baban emirate, Abdurrahman was called as the *mutasarrıf* and also titled as 'Pasha' by the Ottoman administration. The leaders of the *emirate* as in the case of Baban mostly engaged in conflicts with the surrounding *emirates*, *governors* and states. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Baban Emirate engaged in conflicts with the Ardalan (an emirate located in eastern Iran)[28] and with the governors of Baghdad. Such a political atmosphere also leads to the emergence of alliances. Living in a state of conflict with the governors of Baghdad, the Baban emirate sometimes established good relations with

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[25] Bruinessen, "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran: The Case of Simko's Revolt," p. 368.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Mehmet Salih Bedir-han, *Defter-ı A'malım : Mehmet Salih Bedir-Han'ın Anıları*, trans. Rewşen Bedir-Han Mehmet Uzun (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1998), p.23

[28] Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 171.

Iran. [29]

Centralization Attempts of the Tanzimat State

From the beginning of the Tanzimat, with the aim of a more centralized and modernized empire, the Ottoman bureaucracy attempted to establish its direct rule in eastern territories. From this time onward not only the semi-independent Kurdish *emirates* but also powerful families and ruling dynasties like Jalilis of Mosul and Mamluks of Baghdad became targets of the central state.[30] After eliminating the Mamluk dynasty and Jalilis, the Ottoman center turned its face to the Kurdish *emirates*. Within ten years it eliminated all the Kurdish emirates located in Ottoman Kurdistan including two powerful ones Baban and, Cezire and Bohtan.

After the re-conquest of Kurdistan (*yeni başdan feth*) as it was called in the *Takvim-i Vekayi*, (14 December 1847) the official newspaper of the state, the Ottoman Empire established the Province of Kurdistan and appointed Esad Pasha as the first governor in 1847.[31] Newly established Kurdistan Province covered the area of Diyarbekir, Muş, Van, Mardin, Siird, Cezire and Zaho. In spite of a few changes regarding the administrative division of the province, as an administrative unit it continued to exist until 1867-68.[32] From this time onward, although there was no Kurdistan anymore as a province, Ottoman bureaucracy used the word "*Kurdistan*"

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[29] BOA, C.DH 85/4232 (29.Za.1227)

[30] Ebubekir Ceylan, "Ottoman Centralization and Modernization in the Province of Bağdad, 1831-1872" (Ph.D, Boğaziçi University, 2006), pp. 67-75.

[31] Aslıhan Gürbüzel, "Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia (1878-1890)" (MA, Bilkent University, 2008) p. 56. See also; Osmanlı Kaynaklarında Kürtler Çalışma Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek* (Istanbul: bgst yayınları, 2007), p. 113.

[32] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 62.

as an ethnic-geographic entity to refer to the above mentioned regions as they did before the Tanzimat. However, from the side of Ottoman bureaucracy Kurdistan referred more than what the Tanzimat state termed as "the province of Kurdistan." Although it is hard to draw the boundaries of it since Kurds spread to a vast area, for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kurdistan included not only the regions under the province of Kurdistan, but also today's north western Iran and also northern Iraq. Even after the establishment of the province of Kurdistan, Ottoman bureaucracy called northern Iraq as *Kurdistan-ı Irak* and later for northwestern Iran as *Kurdistan-ı Iran*.[33] In this thesis as an ethnic-geographic region Kurdistan refers to the "province of Kurdistan" and also defines territories as *Kurdistan-ı Iraq* and *Kurdistan-ı Iran*.[34]

The logic of the Tanzimat state was to establish direct rule in Kurdistan. Yet the elimination of the Kurdish *emirates* also gave an end to the stability of the region as mentioned by several scholars. Instead of a few Kurdish *emirates* there were now several Kurdish tribes which tried to establish their own dominance in certain territories.[35] Sabri Ateş uses the term "atomization or re-clanization of Kurdistan" in order to explain this process.[36] For instance in Bohtan, where Bedirxan Beg had been ruling before the Tanzimat, several Kurdish tribes and aghas emerged as new power holders like Miran, Goyan, Shırnaklı, Pencaran and etc. From the Ottoman side it

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[33] For the use of the words Kürdistan-ı Irak and Kürdistan-ı Iran See; BOA, MVL 237/76 (20.N.1267) and BOA, Y.PRK.HR 5/8 (15.S.1297) respectively. For the boundaries of the Kurdistan see also; Namık Kemal Dinç, "Kadim Anavatandan Bir Inkar Coğrafyasına Kürdistan " *Toplum ve Kuram, Lêkolîn û Xebatên Kurdi*, no. 2 (2009): pp. 151-73.

[34] These are aproximate territories which Şemsettin Sami defined in his Kamus-ul A'lam in the article of "Kurdistan". Ibid.: p. 156.

[35] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, Newyork: I.B Tauris, 1996), p. 49.

[36] Sabri Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881" (Ph.D, New York University, 2006), p. 85.

was now more difficult to control the region since the central state had to deal with more than one socio-political entity.

As Eugene L. Rogan and Martin Van Bruinessen argue the influence of the Tanzimat state was limited to the provincial centers and in the mid nineteenth century behind the city walls the rule was under the influence of the local powers.[37] In mid nineteenth century Kurdistan, these local powers were generally composed of tribal leaders, aghas and sheiks. Albert Hourani's model of "three dimensional power" which has been introduced to explain the distribution of power in pre-modern İslamic states is to some extent applicable to the Kurdish provinces in the early years of the Tanzimat.[38] According to Hourani, in the Muslim world before the modern times, there were three spheres of radiation from the cities. First, there were the cities where government administration and tax collection was powerful, second the intermediate areas where state established its power through intermediate powers and the third, the mountain spheres, deserts and distant agricultural lands, where state authority was not seen, taxes were not collected and urban law was not enforced.[39] During the Tanzimat era what the Ottoman Empire aimed was to penetrate into the "second and third regions" and to establish its direct rule in these spheres by negotiation or by physical coercion. However, difficulties such as tribal resistance, geography, fiscal constraints prevented the establishment of the direct rule in the region. Such conditions were the determinant factors behind the Hamidian policy in the Kurdish

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[37] Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 176.

[38] Inspired by the article of Beck, "The Tribes and the State in Nineteeth and Twentieth - Century Iran ", p. 193.

[39] Albert Hourani, "Conclusion : Tribes and States in Islamic History," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. Joseph Kostiner Philip S. Khoury (Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), p. 305.

region. During the Hamidian era tribal leaders and sheiks became the intermediaries between central state and society. Rather than a direct rule in the region government established "its authority" through tribal leaders, notables and sheiks. The establishment of the Hamidian Regiments in 1891 should also be regarded as a part of this process. Thus, since the authority of the state was provided through notables of the region, it should be asked that whose authority it was. From the beginning of the Tanzimat to the disintegration of the empire, what was peculiar to the Kurdish region was the inability of the state to establish its direct rule in the region.

Another important aspect of the centralization attempts of the Ottoman Empire in Kurdistan was the implementation of the Land Code of 1858. Like administrative centralization, Ottoman Empire witnessed many difficulties while practicing this new code. During the registration of the lands, local beys, aghas and sheiks benefited from their local power and also their existing ties with the local administration.[40] As Oya Gözel shows, in many cases during the auctions of the mirî lands, the descendents of begs – who were previously owners of the *yurtluks* and *ocaklıks* – bought lands and registered them in their own names in a corrupted way.[41] The Land Code of 1858 had strengthened the local aghas, begs and sheiks and also the failure of the implementation of the Land Code maintained the social and economic positions of the aghas, begs and sheiks throughout the nineteenth century.

Tanzimat bureaucrats were well aware of the fact that in order to penetrate into the Kurdish region and also to break the power of the local tribes or at least to take them under the control of the state, it was necessary to build "modern"

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[40] Oya Gözel, "The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia" (MA, METU, 2007), pp. 57-58.

[41] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

government institutions in the region. At this point, it will be better to define the terms *despotic* and *infrastructural power* which are introduced by Michael Mann to the social sciences. [42] According to Mann, there are two forms of power, first despotic, second infrastructural. Despotic power is "the range of actions that the state elite is empowered to make without consultation with civil society groups and second infrastructural power is the capacity of the state to actually penetrate into civil society and implement its actions across its territories."[43] Although *despotic power* is heavily based on coercion, central government should negotiate with the civil society groups, while increasing its *infrastructural power* According to Mann, the growth of infrastructural power depends on some logistical techniques. State penetrates into social life through the division of labor, literacy, coinage and communication; and so improves roads, ships and telegraph that accelerate this process.[44] In this thesis state infrastructure refers not only to schools, government buildings, judicial apparatuses and military buildings but also to the roads, telegraph lines and postal services which made state access to the region possible. Ottoman bureaucracy applied both despotic and infrastructural powers during the state making process in its Kurdish provinces. The selection of coercion or mediation during this process is mostly shaped by the

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[42] For a study focusing on the attempts of Ottoman Empire in increasing its infrastuctual power in its peripheries see: Eugane L.Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[43] Michael Mann, "Infrustractural Power Revisited," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43, no. 3-4 (2008): , p. 355.

[44] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State," *European Journal of Sociology* 25, no. 02 (1984).

response of the local authorities to the centralization and modernization attempts of the Ottoman State.[45]

Since the centralization attempts of the Ottoman Empire is not the main scope of this thesis, instead of focusing on whole Kurdistan, a few examples are going to be given from a few selected regions, in order to show the logic of the Tanzimat State. For instance in Mutki, (a sub-district of Muş) Ottoman State had organized several military and administrative reforms from the beginning of the 1840's which continued until the dismemberment of the empire. The tribes had settled there were called as Modikan. It is not coincidence that the name of the Mutki appears in the Ottoman archives especially after the elimination of the Cezire and Bohtan *emirate*. After the elimination of the *emirate* in 1847, the central state also turned its face to the places like Mutki where the influence of the government was hardly seen. The aim was to establish a direct rule which would not only provide stability to the region, but also lead to an increase in the amount of taxes collected. In a document dated to 1872, this logic clearly reveals itself. It is stated that the government should built barracks and schools in order to bring the inhabitants of Mutki into the circle of civilization. According to the document bringing them into the civilization will also lead an increase in the collected taxes.[46]

Physical coercion was an important aspect of the policies of the Tanzimat state, in extending its authority over the tribal population. For instance; in one of the telegraphs sent from the region, it was stated that not even one person wished to join the central army in Mutki. Thus local officers demanded a sizeable army to the

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[45] Yonca Köksal shows the factors that lead the use of coercion and mediation towards the Central Anatolian tribes in state making process of the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat era. See: Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 2006).

[46] BOA, I.ŞD 26/1166, (29.Za.1289)

region in order to recruit the local population into the army and help the reforms to be implemented.[47] On the other hand, centralization and modernization attempts of the central state led the emergence of the local resistances in Mutki. The forms of resistance to state infiltration in Kurdistan have changed depending on time and region. Ottoman archives yield important information about forms of resistances that tribes engaged in against centralizing state. During the early Tanzimat era the Kurdish tribes had a limited "repertoire of contention"[48] with the central state. The forms of resistances generally revealed themselves as attacking government apparatuses, cutting the telegram networks and clashes with the local officers. A few examples will help to clarify the issue. During another reform movement *(harekat-ı ıslâhiye)* in1860, most of the tribal leaders of Mutki were captured and imprisoned in Bitlis by the central state.[49] Two years later, tribal militias of Mutki assaulted the Bitlis government buildings and rescued all the prisoners in it.[50] Another example is regarding the resistance to the tax collection. In 1897, tribes of Mutki refused to pay the taxes. The officials and *kaimakam* who came to register the amount of the sheep (*tâdâd-ı ağnâm*) killed by the tribal militias. This led a military campaign against the region.[51] It is also arguable that the state attempts of collecting taxes, settling tribes and recruiting local population into the armies resulted in a kind of tribal solidarity in Mutki. State intervention in this region did not lead to dissolution of the local tribes. Mutki had been located in an inaccessible, mountainous region which gave the tribal

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[47] BOA, DH.MKT, 1487/80 (08.C.1305)

[48] I adopt this term from the works of Charles Tilly see: Charles Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1986).

[49] BOA, MVL 610/40, (28.L.1277)

[50] BOA, MKT.MHM 253/51, (29.B.1279)

[51] BOA, Y. PRK.ASK. 126/30, (1314.Z.22)

population the opportunity of securing themselves from the central state.

Military reform was seen as the first and foremost way of enhancing state authority in the region. During the Tanzimat and early years of the Hamidian era the government paid attention to the construction of military barracks in the region. For instance in 1879, with the suggestion of Abidin Pasha, [who was appointed to the region to follow the reform program initiated by the Treaty of Berlin], twelve barracks were decided to be constructed in the key points of Kurdistan. Also five old ones were to be repaired. It was stated that the construction of these barracks would help the government to prevent the "savage behavior" (*harekât-ı vahşiyaneleri*) of the local population. By constructing these barracks state did not only aim to establish its physical power in the region, but also intended to penetrate into the social and economic life of the region. It was thought that the newly established barracks would enable the local administration to collect taxes in an effective way and this would lead to an increase in the amount of taxes collected. Moreover, by these barracks state also aimed to conscript the local population into the army.[52] The failures of the state in controlling the region were also stated in the report. It was claimed that controlling the region through an army was a temporary precaution (*tedbir-i mevkut*), by the time the army left the troubled region, the tribes again began their "savage behaviors." It was stated that for a permanent order and authority such barracks should be built in the key places of Kurdistan. [53]

Another important way of increasing state infrastructure in the region was to build roads and establish telegraph lines. From 1878 onward, the Ottoman center also focused on the establishment of communication networks in the region. Although

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[52] BOA, İ.MMS 64/2996 (10.N.1296)

[53] BOA, İ.MMS 64/2996 (10.N.1296)

during the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras, little attention was paid to the construction of the roads[54], the telegraph lines increased gradually in Kurdistan during the Hamidian era. The importance of the construction of the roads was also worded by the local administration. Ahmed Fazıl, the commissioner (*naib*) of the Siird, in his report, submitted to the Sultan regarding the affairs of Kurdistan, claimed that roads with police stations were necessary in providing security and encouraging trade for the *vilâyets* of Van, Hakkari and Bitlis.[55]

Contrary to the roads, the construction of telegraph lines increased in time. The map dated to 1890 (see Map1) shows the telegraph lines passing through Cezira and Bohtan. Comparing it with an earlier map dated to 1874, published by Zeynep Çelik, gives clues how state gave importance to communication networks in the region.[56] In 1874, only major cities like Diyarbekir, Cezire, Mardin, Van and Bitlis had telegraph stations in Kurdistan. But in 1890, although the lines did not reach the inner regions, the Ottoman authority had already established contacts with the crucial *sancaks* and some *kazas*. The cities like Diyarbekir, Cezire and Mosul were on the telegraph lines which connected Europe to Asia. Van, Başkale and Diyarbekir also had connections with the foreign countries. Since telegraph offices were established in the places where Ottoman Empire had direct rule, the map also shows the distribution of the central power in the region.

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[54] BOA, BEO 901/ 67507 (1314/Ş/24) "*Anatolu vilâyet-i şahanesinde 15 seneden beru müceddeden hiç bir yol yapılmadığı…"*

[55]Bahattin Demir et al., "Kurdistan Malumatı," *Toplum ve Kuram, Lêkolîn û Xebatên Kurdi*, no. 3 (2010).

[56] Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City, French - Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914* (Seatlle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008) pp. 8-9.

MAP 1: The telegram lines passing from Kurdish region. (BOA, HRT 366, 1890)

The establishment of telegraph offices in the Kurdish cities not only enhanced the administrative contact but also enabled the local population to establish direct relations with the center. As it will be seen in the fourth chapter, the stations of Bitlis, Van and Cezire were very crucial in the power politics of the region.

After 1878 there was a growth in the number of state buildings in Kurdistan. Since state buildings were a physical manifestation of state existence in the region, Ottoman Empire paid attention to such constructions. Like roads, most of these buildings remained limited due to fiscal constraints. But by the 1890's, despite being limited, Ottoman Empire had established its state apparatuses in most of the regions. Herbert Chermside, British Consular appointed to Kurdistan, after his travel around Bohtan and Hakkari districts argued that the since his last visit new *kaimakams* were appointed to the region and gendarmes, courts of first instances, police stations and

other machinery of governments were established.[57]

After the elimination of the Kurdish emirates in the early years of the Tanzimat, Ottoman Empire attempted to increase its infrastructural power in the region. But it should be taken into consideration that the establishment of such state infrastructure in Kurdistan does not imply the existence of a totally centralized state in the region. The power of the state in Kurdistan was still limited. Even towards the end of Hamidian era, out of the city walls, the central state established links with the local population still mostly through mediators. And the sheiks as an influential group in the Kurdish society became new mediators between the state and the people, filling the position of the pre Tanzimat Kurdish mîrs.

Sheikhs; New Mediator between State and People

Another important group which was influential in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Ottoman Kurdistan was sheiks. Sheiks as religious groups had more authority than the religious officials appointed by the central state to the Kurdish vilâyets. The influence of the sheiks continued throughout the following two centuries. As one of the officials stated in 1909 "words of sheiks are obeyed and respected by the Kurds instead of the laws of the state or officials of the goverment.[58] Sheiks were the highest religious authority in Kurdish society, and each was responsible for his own *tariqat.* In the nineteenth century there were two powerful *tariqats* among the Kurds; the *Naqshbandis* and the *Kadiris.* Contrary to the *Kadiris*, the *Naqshbandis* increased their influence at the beginning of the nineteenth

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[57] F.O. 424/162, pp. 77-81, No. 80/1 Turkey No. 1 (1890) , p. 17-21, No 14/1, in

[58] Ahmed Macid, "Kürdistan Ahvali Ve Mesele-I Islahat," *Mülkiye*, no. 8 (1 Eylül 1325).

century.[59] A sheikh known as Ziyaeddin Halid (1776-1826) had a major role in the revitalization of the *Naqshbandi Tarikat* among the Kurds. Bruinessen argues that the rise of the *Naqshbandis* was not only because of the role of Sheikh Halid but also because of the socio-political change in Kurdistan and the "model of organization" that *Naqshbandis* had followed.[60] The lack of a powerful authority caused by the elimination of the semi-independent Kurdish emirates led to the rise of the *Naqshbandis* in the region. The relations of the *Naqshbandis* with the local governors can also be counted as another reason of their rise. They were welcomed by the governors of the region since they were increasing their influence in a region where Şhiite Iran was also trying to establish its dominance.[61] Because of the "threat" of Shiism in the eastern borders of the empire, local governors paved the way to Sunni *Naqshbandis*. It seems that Sheikh Halid had many followers or protectors within the local Ottoman administration. Even after his death, in the conflicts between *Naqshbandis* and other tarikats, local governors acted as supporters of the *Naqshbandi* sheiks.[62] During the Hamidian era in parallel with the pan İslamist policies of Abdulhamid II, sheiks in the Kurdish region received favors from the Sultan.[63] Within decades the *Naqshbandis* had established several branches in different regions of Kurdish provinces. From this time onward, they became influential in the politics of the region. Several insurrections of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Kurdish region like insurrections of the Sheikh

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[59] Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, pp. 225-27.

[60] Ibid. pp. 224-31.

[61] BOA, HAT 826/37428 (5.M.1236)

[62]BOA, HAT 892/39387 (05/S /1243)

[63] Mehmet Mert Sunar, "Doğu Anadolu Ve Kuzey Irak'ta Osmanlı Devleti Ve Aşiretler : 2. Abdülhamid'den 2. Meşrutiyet'e," *Kebikeç*, no. 10 (2000).

Ubeydullah (1880) and Molla Selim (1914) were led by the Naqshbandi sheikhs. After the elimination of the Kurdish emirates in the first half of the nineteenth century, sheikhs acted as mediator between tribes and state. Their authority was also *de facto* accepted by the Ottoman Empire. For instance in a report prepared in 1873, the role of Sheikh Ubeydullah was stressed as such;

> While teaching Islam and "*zikr*" he also advises people that obeying the orders of the government is in accordance with shariah. He works to include the Kurds, who are inclined to idolatry, into the straight path of Islam. The nahiya of Shemdian where the Sheykh lives is on the way of tribal migration routes and at the border. The order and security of this neighborhood would have required three or four battalions. However, because of the Sheiks presence and help [himmetiyle], only a *mudir* and eight *zaptiyehs* are enough to govern and collect all *tekalif-i miriye, aşar* and other taxes on time.[64]

In order to solve the inter-tribal conflicts, the government mostly consulted to the sheikhs. For instance an influential sheikh, Bahaeddin Efendi, who was successful in solving the inter-tribal conflicts in Rekan and Hakkari regions, was also appointed to solve the conflicts between Perwari Kurds and Tayyari Assyrians in 1901.[65] Sheikhs were also mediators between the central state and disaffected / rebellious Kurdish groups. During the times of crisis between the Kurds and the state, government appealed to the sheiks in order to pacify the disaffected circles. For instance, after the declaration of the Second Constitution, most of the Kurdish tribes disaffected with the policies of the new regime. Thus central state used the authority of the sheikhs in order to clear off the disaffection among the Kurdish tribes against the Constitutional government.[66] Sheikhs as religious political groups had established different

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[64] Quoted from; Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881", p. 332. See also Gürbüzel, "Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia (1878-1890)" p. 86.

[65] BOA, DH.TMIK.M 121/6 (18.Z.1319)

[66] BOA, DH.SYS 17/90 (1330.3.6)

alliances. Sometimes they were the leaders of the major revolts in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, but sometimes they supported government operations against the local rebellions. For instance during the insurrection in Bitlis in 1914, Küfrevizades, a religious family from the *Naqshbandi* tarikat of Bitlis supported the CUP's military operation against the Molla Selim, who was also from *Naqshbandi tarikat* and was among the leaders of the revolt.[67]

The Emergence of Kurdish Intelligentsia

Another influential group in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the Kurdish intelligentsia. The word "intelligentsia" refers to a heterogeneous group coming from different social and economic backgrounds who pursued different political ideologies. Nevertheless the common point among them is that they worked for the wellbeing of the Kurds in the empire. Whether Ottomanist, Islamist or Kurdish nationalist, they were interested in the "progress" of Kurdish culture, language and society. Kurdish intellectuals were mostly settled in the urban centers of the empire and having been graduated from the Tanzimat schools they occupied higher and lower ranks of the civil administration of the Ottoman Empire. Thus most of the Kurdish intellectuals were also Ottoman bureaucrats. Kurdish intelligentsia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from different socio-economic backgrounds. Many belonged to the powerful Kurdish families whose authorities were broken in the first half of the nineteenth century like the Babanzades and Bedirxan Pashazades. Some belonged to the landowning and bureaucratic families

[67] See; Chapter IV.

like Cemil Pashazades.[68] Not all the Kurdish intellectuals belong to the powerful families. It seems that many educated Kurds like Memduh Selim, Halil Hayali, Emin Feyzi, Mehmed Şükrü (1881-1960) who were coming from varied socio-economic backgrounds met with the Kurdish nationalist circles during their education or while they were working in Istanbul as a lawyer, doctor or soldier. For instance, Halil Hayali who was from Mutki did not belong to a powerful family. He was an influential figure of the "Kurdish nationalist" circles in Istanbul. He took his early education in Bitlis, later continued to the School of Agriculture (*Istanbul Ziraat Mektebi*) in Istanbul. In the Second Constitutional era, he actively took part in Kurdish organizations that were opened in Istanbul. He was one of the writers of the Kurdish Mutually Aid and Progress Journal (*Kürt Teâvün ve Terakkî Gazetesi)* which was began to be published during the Second Constitutional era.[69] Hayali also prepared one of the earliest works on Kurdish language which is known as "*Elifba-yı Kurmanci*".[70] Another person with less powerful background could be Ahmed Ramiz, who was from Diyarbekir. He wrote a short history of the Bedirxani Family called as *Emir Bedirxan* in 1907. This book is considered as one of the earliest examples of Kurdish history written in a nationalist manner.[71] Kurdish intellectuals who belong to powerful families were also parts of the civil or military administration of the Ottoman Empire. For instance Babanzade Ismail Hakkı[72] who

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[68] Malmîsanij, *Diyarbekirli Cemilpaşazadeler Ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2004).

[69] BOA, DH.SAİDd. 84/409 (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records) See also: Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün Ve Terakki Cemiyeti Ve Gazetesi* (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1999), p. 26.

[70] Mehmet Bayrak, *Açık - Gizli / Resmi - Gayr-ı Resmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, vol. I (Ankara: Özge, 1994), p. 491.

[71] This book is latinized and published with an introduction see: Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek.*

[72] Ismail Hakkı Babanzade, *Beyrut'tan Kuveyt'e Irak Mektubları* (Istanbul: Büke Yayınları, 2002).

came from Baban dynasty and Bedirxan Pashazade Abdurrahman who was from Bedirxani family were employed in the middle and upper ranks of Ottoman administration, but they were also politically active, writing articles in several newspapers, journals including *Tanin*.

Since Kurds was socially fragmented and spread to vast area in the Empire, it becomes hard to answer the question who was the "Kurdish notable." Hakan Özoğlu uses the term "Kurdish notable" in order to refer to sufis, especially coming from the Naqshbandis, Kurdish tribal nobility and also to the families whose leaders managed to secure positions in the local administration.[73] In this thesis in a similar way the term "Kurdish notables" refers to the bureaucratic families (like Bedirxan Pashazades), powerful tribal leaders (like İbrahim Pasha of Milli), sheiks (like Sheikh Abdulkadir), land owning aghas (like Agha-ye Sor) and also educated circles (like Halil Hayali) of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century Ottoman Kurdish society. However, I agree with Djene Rhys Bajalan in the sense that Kurdish notables divided into two groups.[74] Although sheiks, tribal leaders and aghas were considered as traditional notables, the Kurdish circles who were educated in Tanzimat Schools, employed in the Tanzimat bureaucracy were regarded as a new category. Kurdish intellectuals who were active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mostly belonged to the second category. Bedirxan Pashazades who were mostly educated in Tanzimat Schools, working in the Ottoman bureaucracy and politically active in the "Kurdish movement" belong to the second category.

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[73]Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 12.

[74] Bajalan, *Jön Kürtler Birinci Dünya Savaşından Önce Kürt Hareketi*, pp. 45-59.

Since all of these groups were engaged in different power relations with the state and society and responded to nationalist ideas differently in different periods, the usage of the term "Kurdish notables" does not refer to a homogenous entity. For instance at the beginning of the twentieth century while most of the Kurdish notables (intelligentsia) settled in Istanbul were in favor of the constitutional regime, the notables of the region (the ones who joined the Hamidian Regiments[75] and sheiks) were approaching it with great suspect.

As will be shown in the following chapters, the attitudes of these groups, (sheikhs, tribal leaders and intelligentsia) towards nationalist ideas also differ from each other. Although some of the insurrections led by the sheikhs in the nineteenth century had nationalist overtones as in the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah and Molla Selim, a modern Kurdish nationalism was to be constructed by the Kurdish intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Especially during the Second Constitutional period they established several political and cultural Kurdish organizations and published several journals. The attitudes of the Kurdish tribal elites towards "nationalist circles" and "nationalism" were always unstable. Their interests sometimes conflicted with the aims of the "nationalist circles" but sometimes overlapped with them. For instance; tribes of Bohtan which became disaffected with the centralization attempts of the CUP government supported the Bedirxanis in their political movement, but the ones who saw Bedirxanis as a threat to their local power did not support them, and even allied with state. Yet tribes had an important place in the contentions against the state since they provided the necessary masses.

[75] Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press 2011), pp. 95-96.

Approaches to Early Kurdish Nationalism

The date about the emergence of the Kurdish national movement, its motivations, participants and "stages" are continuing debates both in and out of the academia. Different approaches to the early Kurdish nationalism mainly derive from the historical data that the historians have focused on and theoretical perspective that they have used. Moreover "nationalism" is also an important factor that influenced historical studies on Kurdish nationalism throughout the twentieth century. Earlier historical studies on Kurdish nationalism are of the Kurdish political activists who were participated in the early Kurdish movement in the late Ottoman era. Studies of the Süreyya Bedirxan[76], Mehmed Emin Zeki[77] were not only amateur studies but also written with political concerns. What is important about their works was that they were mostly based on first hand experiences of the late Ottoman era.

Most of those studies date the emergence of Kurdish nationalism back to the 1880's, when a powerful Sheikh, Ubeydullah revolted against the Qajar and Ottoman Empires at the Ottoman-Iranian border.[78] The Sheikh by using his religious and social prestige had mobilized a sizable tribal population first against Qajar than against the Ottoman Empire. One of the comprehensive studies on Sheikh Ubeydullah insurrection belongs to Wadie Jwaideh. Focusing on several sources Jwaideh argues that it was the first Kurdish uprising, with its national overtones, that

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[76] Dr. Bletch Chirguh, *Kürt Sorunu*, trans. Nihat Nuyan (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2009).

[77] M. Emin Zeki, *Kürdistan Tarihi* (Beybun Yayınları, 1992). See also: Zeki, *Meşahir-ı Kurd Û Kurdistan*.

[78] Wadie Jwaideh, *Kurdish National Movement, It's Origins and Development* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006). Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, pp. 1-25.

aimed to unify the Iranian and Ottoman Kurdistan and to establish an independent Kurdish state.[79] In order to support his approach Jwaideh gives some examples from the Sheikh's letters. For instance in one of his letters written to the Mr. Cochran, he argued as such "The Kurdish *nation*, consisting of more than 500.000 families, is a people apart. Their religion is different (to that of others), and their laws and customs are distinct."[80]

Contrary to Jwaideh, some other scholars do not consider the revolt as a national one.[81] For instance Hakan Özoğlu emphasizes other factors that led to the insurrection of Sheik Ubeydullah. For him the power vacuum created after the elimination of the Kurdish *emirates* and the Berlin Treaty (1878) which gave promises to the Armenians, were the most important factors which led the Sheikh Ubeydullah to revolt.[82] He also argues that the meaning Mc. Cohran attributed to the word "nation" in Sheikh's letter may be different than what he attributed to it.

A recent and a closer study of the revolt is that of Sabri Ateş. By focusing on the British, Persian and Ottoman Empires' archives, Ateş claims that "the rebellion was an alternative understanding of space and identity at the borderland and should be understood as an attempt to de-activate the boundary created by centuries of Ottoman and Iranian conflict and competition."[83] Ateş also adds that the Sheikh Ubeydullah insurrection "had nationalist undertones" but all participants did not

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[79] Jwaideh, *Kurdish National Movement, It's Origins and Development*, p. 81.

[80] Ibid. p. 81.

[81] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, pp. 73-74. Bajalan, *Jön Kürtler Birinci Dünya Savaşından Önce Kürt Hareketi*, p. 66.

[82]Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, pp. 73-74. Jwaideh also shows them as the reasons of the revolt; Jwaideh, *Kurdish National Movement, It's Origins and Development*, p. 75-83.

[83] Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881", p. 407.

engage in the revolt with national concerns.[84] The most important side of the study is that it shows how the conflicts between the Sunni Kurds and Shi'i Iran triggered the development of the movement.

In line with this in a letter that was written to an unknown persona Sheikh claims that;

> Ottoman Empire had allied with Iran in order to clear off and extirpate Kurdistan. I hope God the lord would not let them do that. You should know that the warrantees and soft and peaceful words of the both sides are totally lie and manipulation. The aim of the both sides is to deceive Kurdistan. (…) If with the decisions of the [officials], the Ottoman Empire withdraw sits army from the border, it will be nice. If they present a structure for Kurdistan, it is [also] nice. God forbid if you became hopeless from all aspects, there is no way other than the unification of the Kurdistan. At this point it is important to work and endeavor for the unification of the Kurdistan. [85]

The letter of Sheikh Ubeydullah contains nationalist tones. He stresses the importance of the unification of the Kurds since he saw the Ottoman Empire and Iran as a threat to the well being of Kurdistan. He was also expecting a kind of autonomy (*Kürdistan içun bir bina ihsan*) for Kurdistan. At this point it will be helpful to discuss the shortcomings of the modernist - constructivist theories in explaining the nationalist tones of the Sheikh Ubeydullah movement. The Sheikh, settled at the Ottoman-Iranian border, had limited connections with the west and also ideologies and thoughts of the western world. It is very hard to claim the role of printing press at the Ottoman and Iranian border, since there were no newspapers or journals circulating around to form a public opinion.[86] It is also hard to speak any kind of

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[84]Ibid., p. 445.

[85] BOA, Y.PRK. AZJ 6/118. (1299) See "Apendix D" for the modern Turkish transcription of the full letter.

[86]For the role of printing press in the spread of nationalism see; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Newyork: Verso, 1991).

urbanization, industrialization (even proto industrialization) and capitalism in the region, since majority of the region consisted of tribal organizations who lived on agriculturalism and/or animal husbandry.[87] Moreover, 1880 is an early date for talking about a category of the "Kurdish intellectuals" even in Istanbul. Thus it is hard to claim that the nationalist feeling of the sheikh was because of the national propaganda of the Kurdish intellectuals.[88] The lack of a powerful state authority in the region, the promises given to the Armenians in the Berlin Treaty, the oppression of the Shi'i Qajar Empire on Sunni Kurds, the reactions to the missionary activities and expectations of the Kurdish tribes from the prestigious Sheikh should be considered as motivations of the revolt and also of nationalist overtones of the Sheikh.

From this time onward to the end of the century, it is hard to talk about any movement (with "national" aspirations neither organized by intellectuals nor local revolts) from the Kurdish side. This time of interval also corresponds to the establishment of the Hamidian Regiments. In this context it will be better to ask; to what extent and in what ways the establishment of Hamidian Regiments influenced the development of early Kurdish nationalism. Robert Olson regards the Hamidian Regiments (1891-1909) as a "stage" in the development of the early Kurdish nationalism.[89] According to Olson, Hamidian Regiments not only enabled Kurds to become aware of other nationalist movements in the empire (like that of Balkans), but also gave them the opportunity to learn modern warfare techniques. Olson argues

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[87] For the role of industrialization in the spread of nationalism see: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Newyork: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[88] For the role of the intellectuals in the dissemination of nationalist ideas see: Anthony D Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (Newyork: Routledge, 1998), p. 91-92.

[89] Robert Olson, *Kürt Milliyetçiiliğinin Kaynakları Ve Şeyh Said İsyanı:(1880-1925)* (Ankara: Özge Yayınları, 1992), p. 33.

that contacts with the Arab and Turkish circles made Hamidian Chiefs to think about the outer world and themselves.[90] In the same line, Bozarslan also argues that the formation of the Hamidian Regiments had accelerated the process of Kurds' defining themselves as a separate community.[91] In fact it is striking that from the establishment of the Hamidian Regiments to the Second Constitutional Period, there were no local uprisings in the Kurdish region compared to the Tanzimat period. However, the local revolts which had begun during the early years of the Tanzimat continued until 1880's. Even the years 1877-1882 witnessed several local uprisings (one of them was lead by two Bedirxanis) which also had nationalist overtones (as in the Sheikh Ubeydullah movement). Why did local uprisings not continue with the same intensity during the era of the Hamidian Regiments? Several answers are possible like the penetration of the state infrastructure in to the region, the pan-İslamic policies of Abdulhamid II, and also a sense of loyalty provided through the establishment of the Hamidian Regiments. As it will be shown in the third chapter, the existence of the Hamidian Regiments (later as Tribal Light Cavalry) in the Kurdish region, not only limited the activities of the Kurdish intellectuals in their own region, but also became a threat on the urban centers like Diyarbekir, Erzurum and Bitlis. For instance, the attempts of the Kurdish political activists like Bedirxanis to engage directly in the politics of Kurdish region were prevented by the Hamidian Regiments. Hamidian Chiefs saw such political activists as a threat to their own power and influence. Moreover, during the Hamidian era urban centers of the Kurdish region were under the pressure and threat of the Hamidian Regiments. This

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[90] Ibid., p. 37.

[91] Hamit Bozarslan, "Kürtler Ve Türkiye Devleti," in *Türkiye Tarihi 1839-2010 Modern Dünya'da Türkiye*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Istanbul: Kitapyayınevi 2011), p. 356.

led to a coalition between the urban notables of the Kurdish cities and Committee of Union and Progress which continued until the dismemberment of the empire.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a kind of "self awareness" emerged among the urban settled Kurdish intellectuals. Contrary to the insurrections with nationalist overtones in the Kurdish geography, this "self awareness" took its inspirations from western ideologies and political thoughts. Kurds who got educated in the modern Tanzimat schools mostly settled in Istanbul. They had published several journals and newspapers like *Kurdistan (1898), Ümid* [Hope] (1900), *Kürd Teâvün ve Terakkî Gazetesi* [Journal of Kurdish Mutually Aid and Progress] (1909), *Şark ve Kürdistan* [East and Kurdistan] (1908), *Roj-i Kürd* [The Kurdish Sun] (1913). Elie Kedourie argued that; "In countries of the Middle and the Fareast, for instance where the significant division in society was between those who belonged to the state institution and those who did not, nationalism cannot be associated with the existence of a middle class."[92] According to him "nationalism, developed rather, among young officers and bureaucrats, whose families were sometimes obscure sometimes eminent, who were educated in western methods and ideas, often at the expense of the state, and who as a result came to despise their elders…"[93] The Kurdish intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century mostly belonged to the eminent families, and were educated in the western oriented schools. They had a clear difference with previous generations and worked for the progress of Kurdish society, culture and education.

The engagement of the Kurds in political and cultural activities and their concerns about the progress of the Kurdish nation, their ideologies and political

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[92] Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), p. 102

[93] Ibid.

thought were referred with different terminologies in academia. For instance Hamit Bozarslan uses the term "cultural nationalism" in order to refer to the activities of the Kurds before 1914. According to Bozarslan, "cultural nationalism" refers to the attempts of Kurdish intellectuals to discover their Kurdish identity, and to awaken their nation in order to reach the civilization. Thus, this kind of nationalism did not have political concerns like the separation of the Kurds from the Ottoman Empire.[94] Like "cultural nationalism" "Kurdism" also refers to the activities of the Kurdish intellectuals who did not include secessionism as a political alternative in to their programs. According to Özoğlu "Kurdism" "mean an intellectual and cultural movement that promotes curiosity about Kurdish language, history and culture. It does not denote an antithesis to Ottomanism; on the contrary it is a part of it."[95] However it should be also noted that Kurds also had political claims for their own community. As will be shown in the fourth chapter, Kurdish notables not only engaged in the politics of the empire by establishing or joining the parties, but also demanded political claims which were not welcomed by the CUP government. Moreover Kurdish notables also established Kurdish political committees like *Kurdistan Halâskâr Komitesi* (Savior Committee of Kurdistan [İrşad]), in order to maintain their movement in an organized way. Because of the close relationship of the Kurdish intelligentsia with the Young Turks and shared political thoughts and common interests, the movement of the Kurdish intelligentsia was also called as "Young Kurd" movement in academia.[96]

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[94] Bozarslan, "Kürt Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)," pp. 845-46.

[95] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 70.

[96] Bajalan, *Jön Kürtler Birinci Dünya Savaşından Önce Kürt Hareketi*.

This thesis does not disregard the "Ottomanist" aspects of the Kurdish intellectuals and their importance in engaging in cultural activities. But, "Ottomanism" "Kurdish nationalism" and "cultural nationalism" are not sufficient terms to define the complexities of the movement and ideology of the Kurds during the late Ottoman era. Early "Kurdish nationalism" neither had a homogenous discourse nor had a gradual development. It was fragmented, and disintegrated in terms of practice and discourse. The sons of Kurdish notables (who had been exiled from the Kurdish region in early Tanzimat) always had a primordial sense of romanticism towards Kurdistan. However their education and employment in the Tanzimat institutions not only resulted in their integration into the social and political atmosphere of the empire but also led the emergence of Ottomanism among Kurdish intellectuals. Thus Kurdish intellectuals were always in between these two identities. Sometimes they were dedicated Kurds other times they were dedicated Ottomans. These two identities were not mutually exclusive. Instead of defining Kurdish intellectuals' of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within "fix identities" like Ottoman, Kurdish or Muslim, this thesis asserts that they had protected their multiple identities until they broke their ties with the Ottoman Empire.

In line with this, the attempts of the Tanzimat state to expand its central power in Kurdistan from the 1840's led to the emergence of new power holders in the region. The state inability to establish a direct rule in the region forced the Ottoman state to appeal such local powers to control the region. The tribal leaders and the sheikhs became new mediators between the state and the Kurdish population, but they were also the leaders of the regional insurrections of the disaffected circles against government. Although some of these local movements had national overtones like in the case of Sheikh Ubeydullah insurrection, nationalism was not the sole

determinant of these movements. The local movements were mostly reactions to the tax impositions, centralizing state, interference of the state into the social, political organization of the particular regions. Such social disaffection could not turn into a national movement since the Kurdish intelligentsia was not influential in Kurdistan. Besides, the social and economic conditions of the region, the inefficiency of mass media, the Hamidian policy of Pan-İslamism should be regarded other reasons that prevented the emergence of nationalism in the region. "National awareness" in the modern sense was limited to the educated Kurds of late nineteenth century of Istanbul. Although this small group could not be influential since they had no powerful contacts with the Kurdish population, they had established several journals and newspapers that fostered "Kurdish nationalism" among the educated, urban Kurds.

CHAPTER III

OPPOSING THE HAMIDIAN REGIME

The social and economic positions of Bedirxan Pashazades in the Ottoman Empire are significant for the scrutiny of family members' positions of power, their relations with the state and also for investigating their encounters with "nationalism." In line with this aim, this chapter will first focus on the social and economic positions of some outstanding family members during the Hamidian era. Then, as an exiled family, their struggle against the Hamidian rule will be mentioned by focusing on the Revolt of 1878, their clashes against the Hamidian Regiments and their involvement into the Young Turk movement. As will be shown in this chapter, not all of the Bedirxan Pashazades opposed the Hamidian rule in the same manner. At different historical moments, family members opposed the Hamidian rule within different manners.

Socio- Economic Positions of the Family Members

The family on which this thesis is focused was generally known as "Bedirxan Pashazades" throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[97] They were descendants of famous Bedirxan Beg, who had ruled Cizre and Bohtan emirate between the years of 1836 and 1847. The title "Pashazade" was related to their father [Bedirxan Beg]'s position in the empire in the middle of the nineteenth century.

[97] It can be argued that using the terms Pasha and Emir was related with the political atmosphere of period. Since the term emir was a more traditional title reffering to the leader of an independent like Kurdish emirate, they preffered to use the term "Pashazade" during their contacts with goverment circles. After the II Constitutional period, they increasingly used the term "emirzade" in their petitions, letters and articles. Using the title "emirzade" had a political connotation, it directly denotes certain traditional power and influence of a Kurdish notable.

Although he was a traditional Kurdish *emir* in the eastern territories of the Empire, he was also titled as commissary governor *(mütesellim)* in 1836, colonel of reserve troops (*asâkir-i redif miralayı)* [98] and *mirmiran* in 1857 [99] by the Ottoman Empire. Bedirxan Beg was one of the last *mîrs* of Kurdistan who began to rule Cezire and Bohtan Emirate in around 1836.[100] As Janet Klein argues, after having brought all the tribes and clans settling in Bohtan under his command, he engaged in modernization of his army by taking Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt as a model.[101] He extended his territories "over the region from the east of Rawanduz in the southeast, to the west of Urmiya in the east, and to the gates of Mosul in the south.[102] He established peaceful relations and alliances with surrounding Kurdish Begs including Han Mahmud (Beg of Müküs) and Nurullah Beg (Beg of Hakkari).[103] He established stability of the region under his rule, paid attention to the educational and material facilities of the region and provided security. Even it was argued that he had intended to build a dock in Lake Van and also a gun factory. The stability and "development" also took the attention of various travelers. Consul Herbert Chermside, who was traveling in Kurdistan in 1889, argued that "in time of their [Kurds'] Begs, mosques, medressehs, schools, bridges, &c., existed in many districts where such evidences of civilization

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[98]Alagöz, "Old Habits Die Hard, a Reaction to the Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt", p. 60.

[99] Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881", p. 99.

[100] Kardam, *Cizre - Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan : Direniş Ve İsyan Yılları*, p. 82.

[101] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 58.

[102] Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881", p. 85.

[103] Kardam, *Cizre - Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan : Direniş Ve İsyan Yılları*, p. 76.

now only remain as ruins."[104] Even tribal leaders of Bohtan in a shared petition written several years after the end of the emirate talked about Bedirxan Beg's power and influence as following; "since Bedirxan Pasha left Bohtan, murder and plunder are increasing day by day…"[105] What brought his emirate to an end was the massacre of the Nestorian population in Hakkari district. Nestorians had been in great expectations in bettering their conditions in the empire. This was not only because of the impacts of the Tanzimat edict but also because of the activities of the European missionaries in the easternmost *vilâyets* of the Empire.[106] Mar Şimon, the leader of the Nestorian population of Hakkari refused to pay any more taxes to the Kurdish Beg of Hakkari (Nurullah Beg) who was in alliance with Bedirxan Beg. In response, Bedirxan Beg organized two operations (1843 and 1846) against Hakkari in which thousands of Nestorians were massacred. Because of the pressure of France and England, the Ottoman Empire organized a military campaign against him in which he was defeated and brought to Istanbul with his family[107] in 1847.

Bedirxan Beg's Revolt and its outcomes not only resulted in major transformations in the socio-economic and political structures of Kurdish society but also deeply influenced Kurdish nationalist historiography of the twentieth century. During the early years of the Turkish Republic, most of the Kurdish intellectuals and

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[104] FO, 424/162, pp. 77-81, No. 80/I in Bilal. N. Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, vol. I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990)., p. 664

[105] BOA, Y.PRK. 1/58 (1295.Z.0)

[106] For the activities of the missionaries in the eastern vilâyets of the empire during this period and its reflections on Kurdish – Nestorian relations see : Hans-Lukas Keiser, *Iskalanmış Barış, Doğu Vilayetleri'nde Misyonerlik Etnik Kimlik Ve Devlet* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), pp. 95-99.

[107] Janet Klein, "Power in the Periphery : The Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the Struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914" (Princeton University 2002), p. 58. See also: Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 180., Ateş, "Empires at the Margin; Towards a History of the Ottoman Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples, 1843-1881", pp. 87-88.

national leaders who had to leave Turkey (among them were also Bedirxan Pashazades) interpreted the Bedirxan Beg Revolt as one of the earliest examples of the revolts with nationalist aspirations. Bedirxan Beg was regarded as a national hero and thus his movement as a nationalist one.[108] Even in the late Ottoman period some of the Kurdish intellectuals wrote about the account of Bedirxan Beg in a nationalistic manner. For instance Ahmed Ramiz who had connections with the oppositional movement against the Hamidian regime, in his work *Emir Bedirxan* had regarded the uprising of the Bedirxan Beg as a national one.[109]

Several other studies explained the Bedirxan Beg revolt in the context of administrative centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire in eastern provinces which had began after the Tanzimat edict (1839).[110] According to Mehmet Alagöz, the revolt was a reaction to the decision of the central government and to the governor of Mosul who aimed to separate Cezire (the center of the Bedirxan Beg's emirate) and connecting it to Mosul in accordance with Tanzimat applications.[111] Thus the main argument of the Alagöz was that the rebel was a reaction to the administrative centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire in region. Other than the determination of the central state in eliminating the semi autonomous entities in the empire, the local conflicts between the *mîrs* and governors had also played an

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[108]Zeki, *Kürdistan Tarihi* , pp. 124-26., Chirguh, *Kürt Sorunu*, pp. 33-38. An Armenian historian also regarded Bedirxan Beg Revolt as a national one see: Garo Sasuni, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketleri Ve 15. Yy'dan Günümüze Ermeni Kürt İlişkileri* (Istanbul: Med Yayınları, 1992), pp. 111-12. Several European schoolars also regarded Bedirhan Beg's movement as a national one see for instance ; Chris Kutschera, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketi* (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2001), p. 27.

[109]Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek*.

[110] For Bedirxan Beg Revolt see; Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu Ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri: Osmanlı Belgeleri Ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Kültür Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1982), p. 69. and Alagöz, "Old Habits Die Hard, a Reaction to the Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt", p. 61.

[111] Ibid, p. 61

important role in bringing the emirates and central state face to face. For instance; governor of Mosul who seems to have a personal enmity with *mîr* had informed the Bab-ı Ali, by connecting Cezire to Mosul; "he would not only nullify the possible threats from the Iranian side but also restrain the movements of the Bedirxan Beg".[112] The idea that the revolt of the Bedirxan Beg was because of the administrative reorganization of Tanzimat state was also challenged by a recent study. According to Ahmet Kardam the reorganization of the administrative status of Cezire had nothing about Tanzimat edict since the Tanzimat applications reached in Kurdistan in 1845. According to him, it was more about the conflicts between Bedirxan Beg and surrounding governors, especially the one of Mosul.[113] Moreover, Kardam regarded reaction of Bedirxan Beg as a result of the central states' attempts in conquering the whole Kurdistan which had began even before Tanzimat edict.[114] It is hard to claim that Bedirxan Beg was a Kurdish nationalist, however from above arguments it is clearly understandable that he did not want to lose his authority and influence among the Kurds as a leader of his seemingly independent Kurdish emirate. As Hakan Özoğlu argues although Bedirxan Beg should not be seen as a nationalist figure, his descendents played an important role in the late Ottoman Kurdish movement.[115]

After the suppression of the Bedirxan Beg revolt, the leader and his family were exiled to the western territories of the empire. They were first kept in Istanbul

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[112]Alagöz, "Old Habits Die Hard, a Reaction to the Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt", p. 62.

[113] Kardam, *Cizre - Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan : Direniş Ve İsyan Yılları*, pp. 131-68.

[114] Ibid., pp. 13, 71-72.

[115] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 72.

then brought to Crete.[116] The newly appointed governor of the Kurdistan, Esad Paşa warned the Istanbul to prevent any communication of the exiled families with the Kurdish region.[117] In the following years most of the family members began to settle in Istanbul. Ottoman Empire especially during the reign of the Abdulhamid II, prohibited the return of family members to the Kurdish region, believing in the fact that they will cause a conflict (*gaile*). Family members who were government officials were not even appointed to regions close to Kurdistan. Such a strict surveillance continued until the end of the Second Constitutional Period and then left its place to a different form of control.

Bedirxan Beg had twenty-one sons and twenty-one daughters.[118] As mentioned in the Introduction, this thesis is not a monographic revision which focuses on life story of each Bedirxan Pashazade. This is beyond the scope of this thesis since there are more than forty children and hundreds of descendants of Bedirxan Beg. Rather it aims to present new insights about their clashes with the Ottoman State and their encounter with nationalism by focusing on certain movements which they had participated in.

During the Hamidian era, Abdurrahman (1868-1936), Mikdat Midhat (b.1856/57), Osman Nuri (d.1912) Mehmed Salih (1873-1915), Hüseyin Kenan (1859-1913) and Abdurrezzak (1870 -1918) were politically the most active members of the Bedirxani family. Although the first four had connections with the Young Turks and also joined the political parties which opposed the Hamidian

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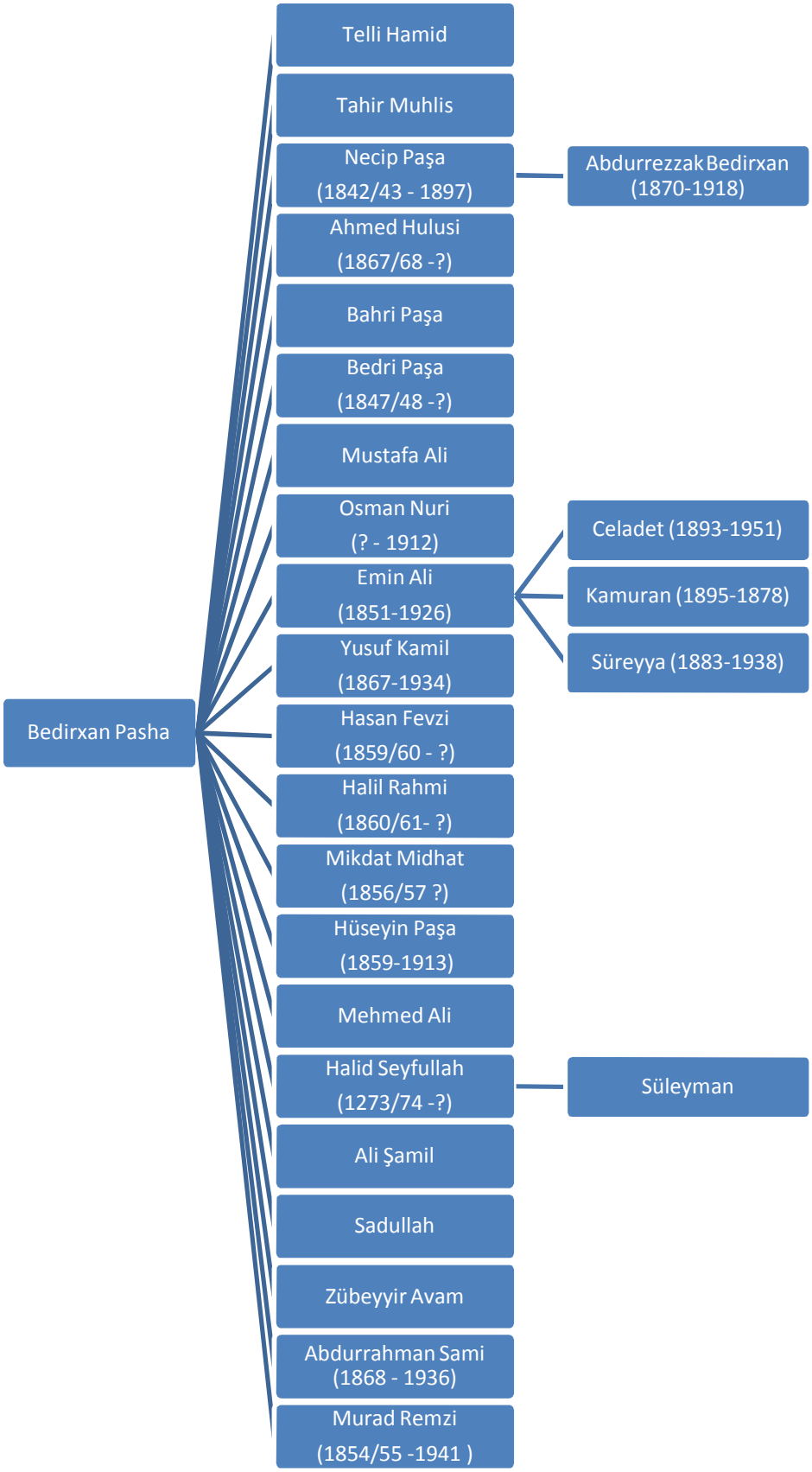
[116] Sevgen, *Doğu Ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri: Osmanlı Belgeleri Ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi*, p. 103.

[117] Sinan Hakan, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Kürtler Ve Kürt Direnişleri (1817-1867)* (Istanbul: Doz 2007), p. 274.

[118] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 79.

regime in and out of the empire, the last two seem to be independent activists mostly struggling to revive their power and influence in Bohtan. Hüseyin, Mikdat and Abdurrezzak maintained their oppositional attitude during the Second Constitutional era against the CUP government via pursuing different political ideologies and alliances. Several other members of the family like Hasan Fevzi (b.1860) Yusuf Kamil (1867-1934) and Süleyman Bedirxan (d. 1915) were also engaged in the "Kurdish movement" after the 1908 Revolution, when Constitutional government provided a relatively free atmosphere.

It would be an exaggeration to define all the members of the family as Kurdish intellectuals. During the Hamidian era intellectually and politically the most productive ones were Abdurrahman and Mikdat Midhat who had penned several articles and booklets in which they opposed to Hamidian regime and determined to enlighten their community. Although several others like Hasan, Hüseyin, Abdurrezzak, Kamil, Süleyman and etc. were directly engaged in the late Ottoman "Kurdish movement" and worked for the material and cultural progress of the Kurds, it would be better to call them political activists, rather than intellectuals.



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[119] This Family Tree is based on Malmisanij's work "Cizra Botanlı Bedirhaniler and Bedirhani Ailesi

Bedirxan Pashazades should be regarded as a bureaucratic family since most of them took important positions both in military and civil administration of the Ottoman State. The members of the family which this thesis aims to focus on were employed as government officials in different parts of the empire. Since their return to Kurdistan was prohibited by the state, they had lost all their connections with the land. Thus, they should not be considered as a landowning family. An amount of salary (19.000 guruş) had been paid annually to the family members in return for Bedirxan Pasha's properties and lands in Kurdistan.[120] Such an amount was not only paid to the Bedirxanis but also paid to the other Kurdish, Arab and Turkish notable families who had been exiled to western territories of the empire during the early years of the Tanzimat, when Ottoman state gave an end to the power of the regional notables. Other than Bedirxan Pashazades, the dynasty of the Baban, the Begs of Kozan and the notables of al-Harkoş had also been paid an amount of salary by the state in return for their *yurtluks* and *ocaklıks* which are confiscated during the early years of the Tanzimat era.[121]Although this amount was considered as a compensation for the revenues of lands and properties in Kurdistan, it was lower than the real revenues.[122] Thus this amount of money was always a matter of debate between family members and the state. The discussion was mainly stemmed from whether this amount was an aid of the sultan (*âtıfet-i seniye*) to the family members or a

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Derneği Tutanakları and also some Sicill-i Ahvâl Records.

[120] BOA, Ş.D 370/34 (1315 B 28)

[121] BOA, Ş.D 2981/41, 1315.R.29/ 27 Eylül 1897 A petition written by the Bedirxan Pashazades, Babans, Begs of Kozan and members Al Harkoş ; "*Esbâb-ı siyasiden tolayı hükümet-i seniyece zabt olunan emlak-ı acizanemizin vâridâtına mukâbil olarak maliye-i hazine-i celilesinden tahsis ve tesviye olunmakda bulunan yurdluk ve ocaklık maaşat-ı çakeranemizin tarih-i tahsisinden şimdiye kadar maaşat-ı umûmiye hakkında icra kılınan"*

[122] BOA, Ş.D 370/34, (1315.B .28)

compensation of the lands (*emlak-ı mazbûta mukâbili*) in Kurdistan.[123]

Education and Employment

Bedirxan Pashazades who was born in the western territories of the empire mostly took their education in the "modern" Tanzimat schools. Most of them at least went to Rüşdiyes, which at the second half of the nineteenth century was enough to be employed in the middle if not higher ranks of Ottoman bureaucracy. Although they had high official careers, some of them were also intellectually active, writing in several newspapers, and others had connections with political organizations and determined to work for the social, material and cultural progress of the Kurds. Like most of the nineteenth century Ottoman intellectuals, Bedirxan Pashazades were heavily influenced by the western ideology, thought and life style. Intellectually and politically the most active family members like Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat and Abdurrezzak were classical "Tanzimat individuals" influenced by the developments of their age. No doubt that Ottoman education had great influence in this process. Family members like Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat, Hasan Fevzi, Süleyman and Yusuf Kamil, who had engaged in late Ottoman "Kurdish movement" with political and cultural concerns, were graduated from Ottoman Imperial High School.[124].

The *rüşdiyes*, *mülkiyes* and *harbiyes* and other schools which were opened during the nineteenth century, were the results of the "Tanzimat ideology." All of these schools were western inspired and opened as a result of the desire to establish a

[123] BOA, Ş.D 370/34, (1315.B.28)

[124] BOA, MF.MKT 47/143 (09.R.1294), See also; Sicill-i ahvâl records of Yusuf Kamil : BOA, DH. Said 76/101, Sicill Ahvâl Records of Hasan Fevzi: BOA, DH.Said 18/12 and Sicill Ahvâl Records of Mikdat Midhat see: Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)* (Istanbul: Vate 2009), pp. 107-13.

central and modern Ottoman state. In the case of the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye*, Taner Timur argues that one of the aims of the Ottoman state was to train qualified personals for the Ottoman bureaucracy who able to deal with the transformations of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire.[125] They did not only play an important role in the path of Ottoman modernization but also functioned as places of the "identity construction." Selçuk Akşin Somel argues that the *rüşdiyes* acted as "political tools for building loyalty to the state in the peripheral areas by strengthening Islamic sentiments among non-Turkish Islamic populations."[126] As will be clearly seen in the following lines, there was a sincere belief in Ottomanism among the sons of Bedirxan Beg.

However, the loyalty to the state was not the only political aspect of such schools. These schools were also places where political movements were shaped. It is not a coincidence several students of the *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* played an important role in the emergence of the Young Turk Opposition.[127] Fatma Müge Gökçek argues that together with the transformations of the nineteenth century western oriented education influenced Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the empire in different manners. Although non-Muslims had engaged in political activities demanding independence, the Muslims tried to alter the power (deposing the Sultan).[128] Most of the Kurdish intellectuals and political activists during the reign of Abdulhamid II aimed to alter the regime, believing in the fact that such a political movement would

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[125]Taner Timur, "Modernleşme Ve Özgürlük Kavgası, Mekteb-I Mülkiye 1859-1923," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 192 (Aralık 2009): , p. 34.

[126]Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001), p. 11.

[127]M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Newyork Oxford: Oxford Universty Press, 1995), pp. 18-26.

[128]Fatma Müge Gökçek, "Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society," *Poetics Today, Cultural Processes in Muslim and Arab Societies: Modern Period I* 14, no. 3 (1993): pp. 508, 33.

beneficial for all Muslim and Non-Muslim subjects and for the survival of the empire.

However, like in every sphere of the life, the education of the family members was also controlled by the Hamidian regime, especially during the 1890s when several students joined the Young Turk movement. For instance, sons of Hasan Fevzi Bedirxan applied to the Robert College to continue their education in 1898, however it was ordered by the palace to prevent them from registering to the school.[129] Another interesting case is the account of Ferid Bey, who graduated from the *Mekteb-i Hukuk-i Şahane* and was willing to continue his education in France. Like the first case, he was not given a passport with the excuse of its not being lawful according to sharia (*caiz*) in 1898.[130] Behind the state discourse of bureaucratic papers there were factual reasons for giving such decisions. In the first case, Robert College played an important role in the education of the Bulgarian nationalist cadres. Most of the graduated students of the Robert College had engaged in the Bulgarian nationalist movement during the late nineteenth century. It can be said that the palace tried to keep away the Muslim subjects of the empire from such schools believing in the fact that such schools might lead to emergence of the nationalist sentiments among them. The second case also stemmed from similar concerns. Since some of the Kurdish intellectuals- among them were also some Bedirxanis like Abdurrahman and Osman Pasha- had joined the Young Turks in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, it can be said that the palace aimed to control the members of the family

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[129] BOA, ZB 393/18, 1322 .T. 3 "*Bedirhan oğullarından Hasan'ın mahdumları Mecdi ve Rüşdü'nün Robert Koleji mektebine gidememeleri içun…"*

[130] BOA, BEO 1176/88152 "22 *"Rebyülevvel tarihli ve 6041 numerolu tezkirede devletleriyle istikar olunan pasaportun itası caiz olamayacağı bildirilir"*

who had the potential to join them.

It should be noted that Bedirxan Pashazades as a powerful family paid attention to their children's education. In their *Sicill-i Ahvâl* records, it can be seen that most of them had also private teachers (*Muallimîn-i mahsûsa*) mostly teaching them in foreign languages.[131] Hacı Qadir Qoyî (1817-1897), the Kurdish patriotic poet was also one of the private teachers of the young Bedirxan Pashazades most probably teaching them in Kurdish.[132] In compliance with their educational and social background most of them knew at least three or four languages, especially French and Arabic.

Like their education, it is also important to mention about their employment in the empire. As said above they were not a landowning family. Since they were in exile, they had no relations with their lands, waqfs, and properties left behind in Cezire and Bohtan. However they, especially the ones in Istanbul, took important positions in Ottoman bureaucracy. Among them Hüseyin Kenan Pasha was appointed as *mutasarrıf* of Antalya (1903), Abdurrezzak as Secretary of Petersburg (1889) and Tehran (1891) Consulates, Abdurrahman as Chief Secretary of Ministry of Education, Ali Şâmil as Commander of Selimiye Barracks, Yusuf Kamil as Kaimakam of Aintab (1903) and of Haifa (1904).[133] Thus most of the family members were middle or upper rank Ottoman officials.

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[131] BOA, DH.SAİD 22/234 (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records) *"...Bin iki yüz seksan bir seneyi hicriyesinde dersaatde tevellüd etmişdir. Sıbyan ve rüşdiye mekteblerinde bade-t tahsil muallimîn-i mahsûsadan Arabi, Farsi, Fransızca okumuşdur. Arabi ve Farsi ve Türkçe ve Fransızca tekellüm ider... "*

[132] Zeki, *Meşahir-ı Kurd Û Kurdistan*, p. 293.

[133] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*. See also Sicill-i Ahvâl Records of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan ; BOA, DH. SAİD 22/234, Hüseyin Kenan Paşa; BOA, DH. SAİD 80/16, and Yusuf Kamil Bedirxan ; BOA, DH.SAİD 76/101See also Sicill-i ahvâl Records of Abdurrezzak, Hasan Fevzi and Yusuf Kamil for their employement in Ottoman bureaucracy in Apendicies.

It should be also noted that the appointment of the Bedirxan Pashazades to certain posts in Ottoman bureaucracy also derived from the desire to keep family members under control. The ones whose loyalty was suspected were kept in Istanbul through being appointed to a governmental position. The appointment to a post was always a barging process in which the Palace reminded family members their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. The sons of Bedirxan Beg like Osman Nuri, Bahri Pasha and Abdurrezzak got many favors from Abdulhamid II after their clashes with the Ottoman State or because of their power among the Kurds. Osman Nuri and Bahri Pasha were appointed as aide-de-camp *(yaver)* of the sultan and Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was appointed as master of ceremonies (*saray teşrifatçısı)* in 1894. (This point will be elaborated in the coming pages)

During the Hamidian era the palace prevented the appointment of any Bedirxani to the regions close to Kurdistan. As will be seen in coming pages, the demands of family members of a post in Bohtan were mostly refused. Even the ones who seemed to have nothing to do with politics also were kept away from Cezire and Bohtan. For instance in 1906, it was stated that since Ismail Efendi was a member of Bedirxani family he should not continue his work in Siird.[134]

Nevertheless, both their education and their employment in Tanzimat institutions had great influence in family members' integration to the Ottoman state. Although they were descendants of a powerful Kurdish emirate who were forced to live in western territories of the empire, their education and employment played an important role in their Ottomanist inclinations, their contacts with Young Turks, and their positivist and enlightened aspects.

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[134] BOA, BEO, 2868/215084, 18.Ca.1324

The emergence of Kurdish nationalism (whether cultural or political) and the opposition to Abdulhamid II among family members cannot be isolated from the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the family members in late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Their struggle for bureaucracy, for accessing the resources of Kurdistan and their educational background all triggered their participation in the political activities. While studying their encounters with nationalism all these variables should be taken into consideration.

Attempts to Return to the Cezire and Bohtan

During the Hamidian Era, there was a continual struggle between Bedirxan Pashazades and the palace on the authority over Kurdish region. Both sides tried to win the support of the Kurdish tribes by engaging in different power politics and alliances. Bedirxan Pashazades as an exiled family tried to revive their political influence which once their father had owned in Cezire and Bohtan. Both the Revolt of 1878 and their struggle against the Hamidian Regiments mostly stemmed from the desire to revive their power and influence in the region. As will be shown in the following three sections, different members of the Bedirxani family by different claims and alliances attempted to return Cezire and Bohtan. On the other hand palace had tried to keep them away from the region by a strict surveillance policy. The first was attempt was led by Osman Pasha and Hüseyin Kenan in 1878 when the Ottoman Empire defeated in the Ottoman Russian War of 1877-78.

The Insurrection of 1878

Although Bedirxan Pashazades had lived in exile in the western territories of the empire, most of them repeatedly attempted to return to the Cezire and Bohtan, by different manners during the reign of Abdulhamid II. The known first attempt was during the early years of the Hamidian era when the Ottoman Empire was defeated in the Ottoman – Russian war of 1877-1878 *(93 Harbi)* and the region turned into a state of turmoil.

The Russo-Ottoman war in 1877-1878 had devastating effects for the Ottoman Empire. Similar to other regions, the war had brought famine, poverty and chaos to the eastern provinces of the Empire. In Erzurum, 10.000 people died because of the famine in 1878.[135] The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in war had almost cleared off the Ottoman administration in the eastern peripheries of the Empire. Kurdistan, where state power was always very low, now turned into a state of turmoil. Since there was no powerful state administration in the region, the only power holders, Kurdish tribes, aimed to increase their power and influence in the region. Hans Lucas Keiser mentions several local Kurdish uprisings in the region during these years.[136]

A short period after the Berlin Treaty in November 1878, Osman Pasha and Hüseyin Kenan Bedirxan, passed to the Cezire and Bohtan and started a rebellion against the central state.[137] Actually during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78 both

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[135]"Arsen Yarman Ile 19. Yüzyılda Ermeniler Ile Bozulan Ilişkiler Üzerine," *Toplum ve Kuram, Lêkolîn û Xebatên Kurdi*, no. 3 (2010): p. 92.

[136]Keiser, *Iskalanmış Barış, Doğu Vilayetleri'nde Misyonerlik Etnik Kimlik Ve Devlet* , p. 169.

[137]Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek*.

Hüseyin Kenan and Osman Pasha had fought within the Ottoman army against Russians in Balkans. Before the war Hüseyin Kenan, had been working as a young officer with a salary of the 600 *guruş* in the *vilâyet* of Adana. When the war broke out he participated with about 3000 Kurdish volunteers which he had organized from the Adana district.[138] Osman Pasha, one of the oldest sons of Bedirxan Beg, in a similar way had joined the war with over 4000 men.[139]

However, in November 1878, without the permission of the palace they passed to the Cezire, where they were welcomed by the local population. As soon as they arrived in Cezire their movement turned into a rebellion. P. I. Averyanov, claims that the rebellion had begun among the Mutki and Reşkotan tribes and spread to the southern parts of the Kurdistan across Van, Bitlis and Muş.[140] It seems that even before the arrival of Hüseyin and Osman Bedirxan in Cezire, the local tribes had engaged in a series of conflicts and clashes with the local administration. Therefore, the arrival of Osman Bedirxan with about 2000 men to the Cezire was welcomed by the local population.

The reasons that led Bedirxani brothers to rebel were various, but was mostly shaped by the desire to revive their lost influence and power which their father had enjoyed before the Tanzimat. It seems that from their arrival to Cezire to the suppression of the revolt by the Ottoman Army, they were always open to negotiations with the state. Osman Bedirxan, who seems to be more influential than

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[138] BOA, DH.SAİD 1/245, (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records) See also: Zeki, *Meşahir-ı Kurd Û Kurdistan*, pp. 131-32.

[139] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/58 (1295.Z.0)

[140] Averyanov, *19. Yüyzılda Osmanlı İran Rus Savaşlarında Kürtler*, p. 185. Ottoman archival documents partly confirms the information given by Averyanov: BOA, İMMS, 60/2821 "*Bedirhan Paşazâdelerden Osman ve Hüseyin Beylerin başlarına bir kaç bin adam toplayub ve Erzurum ve Muş ve Bitlis tarikiyle Bohtan'a gelub ol havalinin asayişini ihlâl(?) bulundukları beyânıyla bunları tedib ve tenkili ve bunlardan dolayı beyn-el halk hâsıl olan heyecanın teskini*".

his brother Hüseyin Kenan, was always in contact with the local governors. Since the insurgents occupied Cizre, they had also own a telegram machine which enabled them to establish contacts with outside world. In one of the Osman Bedirxan's earlier telegrams dated to 23 November 1878, he mentioned that state had misunderstood his existence in the region and denied his movement to be depicted as a "revolt" and himself as a "brigand." He also stressed his service in the Ottoman – Russian War of 1877-78 and how he became poor and destitute when the war came to an end. Moreover he added that he wished to live among the Kurds from whom he received great respect. [141]

As understood from the telegrams that he sent to the governors surrounding provinces, Osman Bedirxan was demanding a kind of position in the local administration of the Cezire and Bohtan. It is clear that, Osman Pasha, as a son of Bedirxan Beg was respected by the Kurds of the region. The support of the local population was used as a "tool" during their negotiations with the state officials. I find it useful to present his conversation with the governor dated as 24 November 1878 while the insurgents still kept Cezire;

> S: [Official]: What kind and [what about] positions are you demanding?
>
> C: [Osman Bedirxan]: I will be proud of even the lowest positions. Although I devoted myself to this, I have only gained harms in return. That is why I came here to be with the Kurds who respected our dynasty.
>
> S : (…) Now our question is about the name and peculiarities of the position you are demanding. That is to say, what is the name, title and the kind of this work?
>
> Osman Bedirxan: I concur with what you deem me worthy of, yet as the people respect me, they will together announce in which position I will

[141] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/58, (1295.Z.0)

> remain in here with a telegram.[142]

The governor of Diyarbekir, Abdurrahman Paşa who was closely observing the developments in Cezire and informed the palace that Osman Bedirxan aimed to be the mutasarrıf of the districts which Bedirxan Beg had ruled[143] before the Tanzimat. In the same day, Osman Bedirxan sent another telegram in which he draw attention to the corruption among the local governors and the disorder which had prevailed in Kurdistan. In his own words;

> Anywhere in Kurdistan, the requirements of the state cannot be carried out. Local people obey me to a great extent. If I am nominated as an official in Kurdistan, I can realize all the things that state asks for. And so the people can also be saved from the cruelty and the pressure of the officials. The Kurds cannot give consent for anything except this condition. [144]

Although he was not clear about the position which he demanded, he was actually trying to get the privileges having been given to the Kurdish emirs before the Tanzimat. An administrative position would also provide him a kind of leadership of the Kurdish community in the empire. They were trying to be mediators between the state and the Kurdish community by claiming that the government could not establish direct relations with the Kurds, and could not carry out its duties. He thought that with such an administrative position, not only he and the state but also local people would get advantages. Without doubt, the devastating effects of the war (Russian-Ottoman war) and the inability of the central state to control the region were regarded as an opportunity by the leaders of the revolt.

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[142] BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK, 1/58, (1295.Z.0) See Appendix K (Document 1) for the modern Turkish transcription of the quotation.

[143] BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK, 1/58, (1295.Z.0)

[144] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/58 (1295.Z.0) See Appendix K (Document 2) for the modern Turkish transcription of the quotation.

The revolt also took the attention of the British consulates who was appointed to the region after the Ottoman – Russian War of 1877-78 in order to pursue the implementation of reforms initiated by the Berlin Treaty. During the early days of the revolt, Captain Trotter in his letter to Salisbury claimed that the whole of the Cezire Kurds involved in an insurrection led by Hüseyin Bedirxan and added that they were not harassing Armenians instead devoting their energies against government troops.[145]

It can be argued that different dynamics were influential in leading the Bedirxan Pashazades and local powers to act together. The local population who supported the Bedirxanis consisted of various groups including the tribes and local aghas of the region. Each joined the revolt with different motivations and it became hard to find a common ground among the main participants of the revolt.

As mentioned in the second chapter the tribes of Mutki and Reşkotan which were said to participate in the revolt were the targets of the central state when the Cezire and Bohtan emirate was eliminated by the Ottoman Empire in 1847. Repeated "reform" (*ıslâh*) operations- mostly by physical coercion – had led to continuous conflicts between the central state and the tribes. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in Russian – Ottoman War enabled these tribes to act freely in the region. It can be also argued that such tribes saw the Bedirxani Revolt as a chance to diminish the pressure of the centralizing state on them.

Other than the above mentioned two tribes, several tribal leaders, local aghas who were settled in Bohtan also supported the movement of the Osman and Hüseyin

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[145] From Captain Trotter, R.E to the Marquis of Salisbury, Turkey no: 51 (1878), p. 16-18, No 5 in Şimşir.

Bedirxan brothers. While the revolt continued, they sent a shared telegraph to Istanbul claiming that;

> Since Bedirxan Pasha left Bohtan, *emvâl-ı mîrîye* and *kura* and several other taxes have not been collected properly. Moreover murder and plunder are increasing day by day. In short, because of the cruelties of the oppressors it has become impossible to pass from one village to another. And it is clear for us that because of the bribery among the officials, above mentioned events cannot be prevented. (…) Now son of Bedirxan Pasha, Osman Nureddin Beg, whose justice is known and accepted by all of us, is in here. If he will be appointed to a post in Bohtan by the state it will be possible only then to diminish the said cruelties and to provide security.[146]

This shared telegram was signed by several people including the leaders of the tribes of Miran[147], Keçan, Tayan, Alikan and Şikakan. There were also signers from the local administration of Cezire and several aghas and merchants from surrounding towns like Eruh and Pervari. The signers were in favor of a stable region, which the Ottoman Empire was far from ensuring because of the difficulties that the war had brought. Most of these aghas – since they also lived in the age of emirates when the region was more stable – were criticizing the local governors who were unable to provide security. Thus it is clear that with the return of the Bedirxani brothers, these aghas expected to ensure the stability of the region which could also be in their own benefit.

The aghas who participated in the Bedirxani revolt had been mostly settled in the Bohtan district. Other than the above mentioned ones, Nazmi Sevgen also lists several other names. Among them; Şir Beyzade Ismail Beg (Şirvan), Said Beg and

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[146] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/58 (1295.Z.0) See Appendix K (Document 3) for the modern Turkish teanscription of the full telegraph.

[147] Tribe of Miran is going to be one of the enemies of the Bedirxan Pashazades after it's entrance to the Hamidian Regimets. But they seem to be supporting the Bedirxan Pashazades in 1878 since two signers [Ağa-yı Nahiye-i Aşîret-i Miran Mustafa and Ağa-yı Aşîret-i Miran Mehmed] of this telegram were mebers of the Miran tribe. The first signer Mustafa should be the famous Mustafa Pasha of Miran who joined Hamidian Regiments in 1891.

his sons Fettah and Hurşid Begs (Şirvan), Ömer Agha (Eruh), Şer Beg and Süleyman Agha (leaders of Usturkan tribe from Şirvan).[148] Since most of these local leaders were engaged in a series of actions against the Armenians, they were also at the target of the British consulates who were appointed to the region in order to follow the reform program initiated by the Treaty of Berlin. Although it is not clear to what extent the Armenian reform debates motivated these aghas to join the revolt, the Armenian reforms at that time were regarded as a threat to the power and positions of the Kurdish aghas and tribal leaders. I did not come across any sources which mentioned Osman and Hüseyin Pasha's opposition to the Armenian reforms during the revolt.

The revolt of the Osman Pasha and Hüseyin Bedirxan did not last long. While negotiations continued about the post that Osman Pasha had demanded in Kurdistan, government gained time in order to organize its army to suppress the revolt.[149] Since there was not a shared common ground, some of the aghas that had been with the Bedirxanis broke up with the insurgents and allied with the state.[150] After the state had suppressed the revolt in January 1879, negotiations began in order to persuade the Bedirxan Pashazades to return to Istanbul.[151] Bahri Bey and Ahmed Hulûsi Bey, two other members of the Bedirxani family, played an important role in these

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[148] Sevgen, *Doğu Ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri: Osmanlı Belgeleri Ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi*, p. 175. Although Sevgen mentions these names he does not give the source of information.

[149] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/58, (1295.Z.0)

[150] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/84, (1296.Ş.24)

[151] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/84, (1296.Ş.24) "*El-yevm Osman Bey bendelerinin kendi mühürüyle aldığım tahrirâtına nazaren buraya altı saat mesafede bulunan Şirvan'a gelib istemiş olduğu elbiseler dahi gönderilmiş olduğundan yarınki gün Siirde gelub merhamet-i huzur-i şehinşahiye dehalet edeceği maruzdur efendim.*"

negotiations.[152] Especially Bahri Bey was very close to the palace and had acted as a mediator in moments of crisis between state and Kurdish notables. Such roles had also enabled him to secure his positions in Ottoman administration and also to be awarded by the state.[153]

The revolt of 1878 and the following events provide not only information about Hamidian policy towards the Kurdish notables but also entail clues about the *surveillance* and *administrative power* of the Ottoman state. During the revolt, the palace had demanded the names and locations of the Bedirxanis throughout the empire.[154] Then they detected the "potential suspects" who were settling close to the Kurdistan and put them under surveillance.[155]

After the suppression of the revolt the state decided to bring Bedirxani brothers to Istanbul (*Dersaadete celb ile*), with the aim of confining them to a certain place (*memalik-i mahrusa-i şahanenin münâsib mahâlînde ikameleri mukarrer*) putting them under surveillance (*ikamete mezuniyetlerinin dahi zabıta Nezâretlerine havalesi*) and also promoting them to a position in the bureaucracy with a high amount of salary (*Osman Bey'e bin beş yüz ve Hüseyin Bey'e yediyüz elli guruş maaş tahsisiyle)*.[156]It seems that with such a policy Ottoman administration intended to integrate two Bedirxanis to the Ottoman center, where the state was more powerful

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[152] BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK 1/84 (1296.Ş.24) "*Halbuki şimdiye değin afv-ı merhamet-i şahane kendilerine tebliğ olunmamış olmağla tereddüdde kalmış oldukları bi'l-istihbâr bu kere Müşir Paşa Hazretleri bendeniz ve Bahri Bey bi'l müzakere afv-ı merhamet-i şahaneyi mumaileyhmaya tebliğ eylemek üzere Bahri Bey refakatinde…"*

For the role of Ahmed Hulûsi Bey see: BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK, 1/58, (1295.Z.0)

[153] BOA, Y.EE 72/163, (17th telegram)

[154] BOA, İ.DH 778/63332 2

[155] BOA, Y.EE 72/163, (4th telegram)

[156]BOA, İMMS 64 3033, (1296 ZA 20), Y.PRK: BŞK. 1/84

than the periphery.

Henry C. Barkley, a traveler of the region, mentions how Abdurrahman Pasha (Governor of Diyarbekir, who was an influential figure in the suppression of the revolt and a dedicated believer of radical centralization), got angry with the decision of the palace in forgiving the leaders of the revolt and also awarding them with certain ranks and salaries. He also claimed that "if the remaining children of the old pasha do not come one after the other and earn a pension like their brother, they are fools!"[157]

Bozarslan argues that "the Ottoman state tradition conceived of rebellion, or at least resistance, as a means of bargaining and negotiation by the subordinate peripheral groups for improving their status within the state."[158] The revolt of Bedirxani brothers can also be evaluated within this context. From the beginning to the end the insurgents were in bargaining with the state by showing the support of the local notables as a tool. They not only aimed to be mediators between the state and Kurdish society, but also aimed to ameliorate the conditions of the local Kurds. This revolt has been mentioned little in the secondary literature and also has been represented as one of the "early revolts" that aimed the liberation of the Kurds from the empire. [159] However, this revolt should be regarded as a struggle for the leadership of the Kurdish community, an attempt to enhance power and influence among Kurdish population. In other words it was an effort to gain the privileges which once Bedirxan Beg owned in Kurdistan as a leader of his semi independent

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[157]Henry C. Barkley, *A Ride through Asia Minor and Armenia* (London: 1891), pp. 278-79.

[158] Bozarslan, "Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contrat to Rebellion (1919-1925),", p. 186.

[159] Ş.X.. Mıhoyan M.S. Lazarev, ed., *Kürdistan Tarihi* (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2001), p. 150., Celîlê Celîl, *1880 Kürt Ayaklanması*, trans. Yaşar Abdülselamoğlu (Stockholm: Jîna Nû Yayınları, 1992).

Kurdish emirate.

After the revolt had been suppressed and Bedirxani brothers put under control, the Ottoman state turned its face once again to Kurdistan. The Bedirxani revolt of 1878 also coincided with the reform applications in the eastern provinces of the empire which were initiated by the Treaty of Berlin (1878). In line with the Berlin Treaty, British consulates and Ottoman local administration decided to exile the Kurdish aghas and tribal leaders who had joined in the atrocities against the Armenians.[160] Abidin Pasha who had been appointed in order to follow the affairs in the eastern provinces decided to send many Kurdish aghas and tribal leaders to Sivas and Aleppo.[161] Among the exiled local leaders there were also ones who had joined the Bedirxani revolt. In a report of the local governor argued that "It can be said that the counter movement which they dared to prepare emerged because of the encouragement and mischievous indoctrination of some sides and also because they did not understand the harmful ideas of the bloodthirsty Bedirxan Pashazades and were provoked and deceived by them…"[162]

It is not certain that to what extent the Armenian Reform program triggered the above mentioned aghas to participate in the Bedirxani Revolt. It would make more sense to claim that these exiles should be considered within the context of reform program initiated by the Treaty of Berlin (1878). Yet since local aghas also established contacts with the leaders of the revolt, state officials hurried to expel them from the region believing in the fact that the security of the region could only

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[160] Gürbüzel, "Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia (1878-1890)".

[161] Ibid., p. 55.

[162] BOA, İMMS 61/2863

be provided through their displacement.[163] Without doubt, with these exiles the Ottoman administration also wished to increase its direct power in the region. In fact the state power in the region was mostly provided by physical coercion. A letter written by Major Trotter to Sir Henry Layard summarizes the issue. He claimed that; "A great many of the Sert [sic] and Bohtan Begs and aghas are in confinement, and perfect tranquility now existed in the districts; but whether that state of things will continue after the departure of the Izzet Pasha and his soldiers it is difficult to say".[164]

Although some of these local leaders returned to their previous locations, some remained in exile for a while.[165] Gürbüzel argues that Abdulhamid II did not let Abidin Pasha go further about the exile of the Kurdish aghas from the region.[166] This was not only a sign of the Hamidian policy towards the Kurdish tribes, but also the beginning of the transformations that took place in Bohtan which made the return of the any Bedirxan Pashazade possible.

Opposing the Hamidian Regiments

It seems that the idea of benefiting from the Kurdish tribes as *zabtiyes* was debated in Ottoman bureaucracy as early as 1860's.[167] However the formation of the Hamidian

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[163] BOA, İ.MMS 61/2863

[164] F.O 424/81, p. 240-242, No. 319/1 in Şimşir, p. 332

[165] BOA, ŞD 1457/36 (1300 .L .7) "*Bedirhan Paşazâdeler hadisesinden tolayı bila mahkeme Mardin'de mahbus bulunan Süleyman ve Fettah ve Mehmed ve İbrahim ve rüfekasının esbâb-ı töhmet ve mahbusiyetlerinin tahkiki ve beyânı…*"

[166] Gürbüzel, "Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia (1878-1890)", p. 55.

[167] Gözel, "The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia", p. 99.

Regiments was more than a security concern. Policies of the Abdulhamid II towards the Kurdish aghas between the years 1878 and 1890 were a sign regarding the establishment of the Hamidian regiments. As mentioned above in accordance with the Berlin Treaty (1878) several Kurdish aghas and tribal leaders who were engaged in atrocities against the Armenians were decided to be exiled by Abidin Pasha. However as Gürbüzel argues, Abdulhamid II did not let him to go further about the exiles of these Kurdish aghas in order to balance the Armenian ascendancy.[168] Moreover, because of the same concern palace paid attention to the appointment of the Kurds to the local administration of the region[169] which was obviously against the reform package outlined in the Treaty of Berlin (1878).[170]

In 1890, with the suggestion of the Zeki Pasha, the Commander of the fourth Army, Hamidian Regiments was formed.[171] In the first article of the regulation on the Regiments, the reason of the formation was stated as "to protect the country against the enmities and assaults of the foreigners."[172] It is obvious that the word "foreigners" refers to the Russians and so most of the Hamidian Regiments were concentrated on the Ottoman-Russian border.[173] However Hamidian Regiments was not established solely due to the concern of protecting the border. Janet Klein

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[168] Gürbüzel, "Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia (1878-1890)", p. 42.

[169] Ibid., p. 65. (This policy is going to be given up by the CUP goverment during the II. Constitutional Era. Contrary to the Hamidian regime, CUP goverment paid attention to the appointment of the Turkish "reliable" *valis* to the region. See Chapter IV.)

[170] According to the Reform Package Armenians were going to be represented in the Institutions of the Genderma, Police and Taxation regarding to their population rate; See Nadir Özbek, ""Anadolu Islahatı," "Ermeni Sorunu" Ve Vergi Tahsildarlığı,," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 9 (2009): , p. 60.

[171] Bayram Kodaman, *Sultan Ii Abdülhamid Devri Doğu Anadolu Politikası* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1987), p. 33.

[172]Ibid., p. 34.

[173] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 185.

explains the reasons of the formation of the Regiments as such:

> First it (Hamidian Regiments) would bring elements that were outside the reach of the central authority into the fold. Access meant control: the opportunity to learn about and thus regulate the movements and activities of a largely mobile people, the ability to collect taxes and recruits for the regular army from a people who scarcely contributed either; and the chance to introduce the sultan as a higher authority than the local chiefs. It would balance the existing powers, each a certain threat to central rule, playing one against the other and backing some over others, but ensuring that such a support was clearly a gift from the sultan and could withdraw at any time. It could penetrate a region where the notion of "Ottomanness" was week at best, could help civilize and assimilate the people lived there, and could further the Ottoman project to extend state power, or "governmentality".[174]

Moreover, Klein adds two more concerns in the formation of the regiments, first to block a possible Russian invasion, second to balance the Armenian Revolutionary Movement.[175] Military circles in the empire were also well aware of the importance which Cavalry units had during the wars. For instance colonel Ibrahim Edhem, who was also *aide de camp* to Sultan, in his book published in 1891/92, *Cündilik ve Hamidiye Süvari Alayları*, focuses on the importance of forming cavalries by giving several examples from the history of the European Wars. He also states the benefits of unpaid cavalries provided by Kurds, Arabs and Circassians.[176]

As always mentioned the liquidation of the Bohtan Emirate and exile of the Bedirxan Pasha created a power vacuum in Kurdistan in the middle of the nineteenth century. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, tribes of Miran, Batuan and Shırnaklı emerged as new powers in Bohtan.[177] Since the state authority in the Bohtan was very limited, these powers controlled most of the region or tried to expand their

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[174] Ibid., p. 23.

[175] Ibid.

[176] İbrahim Edhem, *Cundilik Ve Hamidiye Süvari Alayları* (Daire-i Askeriye Matbası, 1307).

[177]Demir et al., "Kurdistan Malumatı,", p. 223.

power via engaging in different alliances between or clashes with either each other or the state. In 1895, Ahmed Fazıl, the *naib* of Sason, in his report which he prepared about the affairs of Kurdistan, called these powers as "the ones who were trying to emerge as new Bedirxanis."[178]

The participation of the Miran to the Hamidian Regiments in 1891 changed all the power balance of the Bohtan. The tribe of Miran was a semi settled tribe which in summers had been settling in southern parts of Lake Van and in winters had been migrating to the south (Cezire)[179], where the tribe of Batuan and Agha Sorzade Mehmed had been influential. Contrary to Batuan and Agha Sorzade Mehmed, the leader of Miran, Mustafa Pasha, established good relations with the head of fourth Ottoman Army, Müşir Zeki Pasha. As Klein argues, his relations with the local government apparatuses and his entrance into the Hamidian Regiments enabled him to raise his power in the Bohtan.[180] For instance during the annual migrations, Miran was protected from the attacks of the nearby tribes by the government.[181] In the time of conflicts with the surrounding tribes he took the support of the fourth army in order to suppress other power holders in the region.

Thus, in 1890s the rise of the Miran tribe as a new power inevitably resulted in conflicts and collisions in the region. In the Bohtan district it had conflicts with Batuan, Shırnaklı and Goyan tribes. The dispute between these tribes was mainly due to the spring and autumn passages *(yaylak ve kışlak)* of the Miran through the region

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[178] Ibid. p. 229 "*Bohtan" kıt'asında hâl ve mevki'den bil-istifâde yeni Bedirhanlar gibi zuhûr etmeye çalışur ağâdan eksîk olmuyor.*"

[179] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 66. See after : Sykes, *The Caliph's Heritage a Short History of the Turkish Empire,* , p. 562.

[180] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 65.

[181] Ibid.

where Batuan and Shırnaklı were settled.[182] There was also an old feud between Miran and Goyan tribes.[183] In the south a few clashes occurred between Arab Tayi tribes and Miran because of the tax collection of a few villages.[184]

In around 1893, Agha Sorzade Mehmed of Shırnaklı, Mehmed Mısto of Batuan tribe and some of the relatives of Bedirxan Pasha (Mehmed and Derhun Beg) allied against the Miran. Palace immediately ordered to scatter the coalition shaped against the Miran.[185] A few clashes also emerged between the tribe of Batuan and Miran. Müşir Zeki Pasha put much of the responsibility of the conflicts on the shoulders of Batuan and tried to protect Miran by mentioning its successes.[186] The Tribe of Batuan was well aware of the fact that, it would be useless to fight with the Miran since it was protected by Müşir Zeki Pasha. This is why the leader of Batuan, Mehmed, applied for the Hamidian Regiments in 1893.[187] He probably thought that by joining Hamidian Regiments, he could deal with the rising power of Miran. However his application was most probably rejected by the palace since there was no tribe in the name of "Batuan" in the lists of the Hamidian Regiments.[188]

While the Bohtan region was in a state of turmoil, one year before the battles

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[182] Ibid.

[183] Sykes, *The Caliph's Heritage a Short History of the Turkish Empire,* , p. 562.

[184] BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 134/1, (1315.C.6)

[185] BOA, BEO, 248/18531, (1311.M.16) "*Siird Sancağına merbut Şırnaklı Mehmed Ağa Sor'la, Batuvanlı Mehmed Mustafa, Behnanlı ümerasından Bedirhan Paşa'nın birâderzadeleri Mehmed ve Derhun beyle birâderlerini beynlerine celb ile kumpanyalar teşkil ve Miranlı Mustafa Paşa'nın 'aleyhine takip eyledikleri ve aşâir-i merkumenin beglerini içlerine celb itmeleri pek muzır olub ol havalinin asayişini ihlâl etmeleri…*" See also; Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*.

[186] BOA, Y. PRK. ASK. 96/26 in Süphandağ, pp. 256-59

[187] BOA, BEO, 176/13151, (1310.N.11)

[188] For the list of Hamidian Regiments see: Klein, "Power in the Periphery : The Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the Struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914", pp. 353-59. and Averyanov, *19. Yüyzılda Osmanlı İran Rus Savaşlarında Kürtler*, pp. 368-82.

between Batuan and Miran (1892) two of the Bedirxanis, Abdurrezzak and Halil Rahmi Bedirxan attempted to visit Kurdistan. After their travel in Russia and Iran they were arrested in Van while they were trying to pass the border. Even a letter captured on Abdurrezzak Bedirxan which was written to Resul Beg in which he claimed that he was in the region in accordance to the will of Sultan.[189] During their interrogation in Van, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan expressed his reasons of travel. He noted that by this travel he aimed to take the attention of the Sultan to the two issues related to his mistreatment. First he claimed that he was unjustly accused of beating an officer in Tekfurdağı (*Tekirdağ*) which his father was working as *mutasarrıf*. Second, he stated that he was unjustly dismissed from his post in Tehran Consulate and remained without an occupation since then. He also added a third reason for his travel and mentioned that his grandfather (Bedirxan Beg) had been respected by the Kurds of Van and Bitlis and thus since he was the grandson of Bedirxan Beg he may also be respected by the Kurds and may took their support in order to reach prosperity.[190]

Halil Rahmi also stressed the same points and tried to convince the officers that their travel in the region had nothing about politics. However, as a historical source, it is necessary to be careful while referring to a police interrogation report. Sources always bear the possibility of misinformation. Nevertheless, it is apparent that most of Bedirxanis were demanding the lands and properties of Bedirxan Beg, but such a demand had an important role in the mobilization and politization of Bedirxan Pashazades against the state. As a Kurdish family they wanted to be in the region where they had local support and could engage in economic, politic and also

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[189] BOA, Y.A HUS 264/205, (1310.S.29)

[190] BOA, Y.A HUS. 264/205, (1310.S.29)

social relations with the local population.

Two years later, in 1894, Abdurrezzak was again in the region. Palace warned the local governors to take precautions against his activities in there. In a telegraph written from palace to Trabzon, Erzurum, Bitlis and Van Provinces, it was stated that Abdurrezzak should be immediately arrested since he aimed to support the Armenian agitators (*Ermeni müfsidleri*) and also aimed to create a conflict in Kurdistan with the encouragement of the British.[191] In the same document it is also stated that if Abdurrezzak do not surrender to the local forces, he should be treated like a bandit. Not much later a telegraph from Bayazid noted that he aimed to visit the Nestorians of Hakkari and then probably aimed to pass Bohtan where he had an influence on local population.[192] In 12 December 1894, palace now declared that any governor will be held responsible, if Abdurrezzak will create a conflict in his *vilâyet* and the ones who capture Abdurrezzak Bedirxan are going to be awarded.[193] The Palace was paying great attention to the activities of the Abdurrezzak Bedirxan and fearing a possible alliance between the Kurds and Armenian or Nestorian communities in the region.[194] It is highly possible that Abdurrezzak intended to take the support of the Armenian and Nestorian populations in its struggle against the Hamidian Regiments. Janet Klein argues that, "they (Abdurrezzak and Halil Rahmi) accepted the protest of some "10000 of their clansman against the formation of Hamidiye.[195] It is not clear

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[191] BOA, Y.PRK.UM 30/97 (1312.R.27)

[192] BOA, BEO, 516/39415 (1312.C.3)

[193] BOA, BEO, 532/398391 (1312.C.13) "*Ve mumaileyh tarafından kangi vilâyet dahilinde uygunsuzluk vuku'uyla münasebetsiz ahvâl zuhura gelur ise o vilâyet valisinin mesuliyyetini bulub ve derdesti dahi bais-i mükâfât olacağı ba-irâde-i seniye cenâb-ı hilâfetpenahi tebliğ olunur.*"

[194] BOA, BEO, 516/39415 (1312.C.3)

[195] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 89.

where and how Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was arrested. Yet in the same year, he was appointed as Master of Ceremonies (*Saray Teşrifatçısı*) with 4000 guruş salary.[196] It is clear that like Osman and Hüseyin Bedirxan who had revolted in 1878, Abdulhamid II aimed to keep Abdurrezzak in control by appointing him to a post in Istanbul. As going to be discussed with more examples, the government mostly applied to the policies of exile, appointment to a post and monitoring while dealing with the "trouble making" Bedirxan Pashazades.

The attempts of the Bedirxanis to increase their political and social power in the region also clashed with the interests of the Hamidian Regiment of Miran. Actually, as seen, Miran was as one of the supporters of the Bedirxani revolt in 1878 (see previous part of this chapter). Yet after its entrance to the Hamidian Regiments and increasing its power by subordinating the surrounding tribes, it did not wish to share its power with anyone. On the other hand, Bedirxan Pashazades, in the intertribal conflicts of the region, established contacts with and also supported the tribe of Batuan against the rising power of the Miran. In a telegraph dated to 1893, Müşir Zeki Pasha, the Fourth Army commander, mentions the success of the Hamidian Regiments in preventing Bedirxan Pashazades' influences in the region as such;

> As presented in the telegraph dated to 8 July 1309 [20 July 1893], the reason of the movement of the Batuans is because of the Bedirxan Pashazades' peculiar idea of showing how they are important in Kurdistan via contravening Hamidian High Corps. All along, although they [Bedirxan Pashazades] have had some supporters and members in Bohtan especially among the Batuans, they have not had any influence or importance among the other tribes. Last year when they tried to pass Iran to come Bohtan with an insidious idea, they were surrounded by Hamidian Cavalry

[196] BOA, BEO 422/93 (1312.Ş.8)

Notables. [197]

However, Miran was not the only power who was against the Bedirxan Pashazades. Agha-ye Sorzade Mehmed the powerful agha of Şırnak was also opposing the Bedirxanis in 1894.[198] Actually the conflicts between him and Bedirxan Pashazades were dated to as early as 1878. During the revolt of 1878, he rejected to join the insurrection started by Bedirxanis. A bloody battle happened between his tribesman and rebels which resulted in more than 100 deaths.[199] Moreover in 1894, when Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was in the region, Agha-ye Sorzade Mehmed helped central state in finding him. [200]

According to a petition written by Agha Sorzade Mehmed, Bedirxani Mehmed Beg was in a preparation of a fight against the government troops. He claimed that since he had been a loyal subject of the Sultan, a clash between him and Bedirxani Mehmed was inevitable. Thus he demanded the protection of the population of Cizre which he claimed as 10000 people.[201] Ministry of Justice, also the old governor of Diyarbekir, Abdurrahman Pasha noted that Agha Sor showed great usefulness in the suppression of the Bedirxani revolt of 1878 and still had

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[197] Kemal Süphandağ, *Büyük Osmanlı Entrikası Hamidiye Alayları* (Istanbul: Komal Yayınları, 2006) p. 255. See Appendix K (Document 9) for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

[198] Agha Sorzades were a powerful family of Shırnak. Although they did not joined the Hamidian Regiments, they protected their position by engaging in different alliances. In 1878 they helped goverment troops in suppressing the Revolt Bedirxani Brothers. In 1893 they acted with Bedirxanis in order to oppose the rising power of Miran of Mustafa. In 1894 they now turned against Bedirxanis and allied with the state in finding and arresting Bedirxan Pashazades. The same family again supported Bedirxanis after the consolidation of the II. Constitution in 1908. All these cases shows how alliances were changed very rapidly in Kurdistan. See also: Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 71.

[199] BOA, DH.TMIK 110/24, (1319.C.5)

[200] BOA, BEO, 519/38923, (1312.Ca.23)

[201] BOA, DH.TMIK 110/24, (1319. C.5)

contributions to the struggle against the Bedirxani Mehmed Beg. Thus his petitions should be taken into consideration.[202] At the end, Bedirxani Mehmed Bey was arrested by the government troops with the help of Mustafa Paşa of Miran. Then, he was exiled to the Hicaz.[203]

The Hamidian Regiments in general and the Tribe of Miran in particular was also at the target of the *Kurdistan* journal published by Mikdat and Abdurrahman Bedirxan. Contrary to the Abdurrezzak and Halil Rahmi, it seems that they mostly struggled against Hamidian regiments through their publications. In one of the articles published in *Kurdistan*, Abdurrahman Bedirxan criticized the outrages of the Miran and stated that how a "shepherd" like him became a "Pasha" after his entrance into the Hamidian Regiments.

> Who else carries out the atrocities in Kurdistan but the members of the Hamidiye divisions, who are armed by the sultan and proud of being loyal to him? For example, there is Mustafa Pasha, the head of the Miran tribe, within the borders of the Diyarbekir [province]. He used to be a shepherd ten or fifteen years ago in his tribe, and was called "Misto the Bald.[204]

Müşir Zeki Pasha, the Fourth Army Commander, in one of his telegraphs dated to 1902, mentioned the benefits and success of the Hamidian Regiments. His telegraph also summarizes the role of the Hamidian Regiments in the eastern territories of the Empire. He argued that the attempts of the Bedirxanis in reviving the Bohtan emirate and Armenians attempt in "conspiracy" became fruitless due to the success of the Miran and other Hamidian Regiments.[205]

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[202] BOA, DH.TMIK 110/24 (1319. C.5)

[203] BOA, DH.MKT 2576/78 (1319.L.8)

[204] Quoted from; Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 52.

[205] BOA, Y.PRK.ASK 154/84, 1317.Ca.7 in Süphandağ, p. 297.

The Court of 1898

In 1898 both the opposition to Abdulhamid II and the attempts to return to Kurdistan had led to the trial of the Bedirxan Pashazades. With the report of a man called Ömer Efendi, a letter was captured by the police officers in the pockets of Halepli Mustafa Nuri Efendi, in the port of Samsun. The letter was written to the notables of Kurdistan by Bedirxan Pashazades. The original copy of the letter is absent, so it cannot be certainly known what is exactly written in it. Nevertheless not contradicting but differing stories were also told about the letter.[206] However, the interrogation report could reveals some information since this letter was the reason of their arrest. First it is understood that Bedirxan Pashazades were willing to return to the Kurdish region, and second they also aimed to establish some contacts with foreigners.[207] This letter and a series of earlier events resulted in the arrest of some Bedirxan Pashazades in Istanbul for about four months. In September 1898, Emin Ali, Yusuf Kamil, Murad Remzi, Ali Şâmil, Hasan and Mustafa Nuri were brought to Taşkışla Prison. Bedirxan Pashazades were accused of establishing a secret alliance which aimed to arm the people of Kurdistan in order to engage in killing, grapping and plundering.[208] Other than court records, the early Kurdish historical writings claimed that the arrest of the Bedirxan Pashazades was related to their intention of

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[206] Bahattin Demir and Serhat Bozkurt, "Osmanlı Gazetesi Ve Kürtler," *Müteferrika*, no. 37 (2010). "*Biz Kürdistan'a muhaceret ideceğiz. Pederimizin vatanında hatm-ı enfâs-ı hayat itmek bizler içun bâdî-i saadetdir. Bizim içun hâne isticar eyleyiniz.*",Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfi (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek*.

[207]BOA, Y.PRK. AZN 19/90

[208] BOA, Y.PRK. AZN 19/90 "*Memalik-i Mahrusa-i Şahaneden Kürdistan ahâlîsini silahlandırarak gasb ve garet ve tahrib-i memleket ve katl-i nüfus ifa'alini icra kasdıyla bir ittifâk-ı hafi ve kaziyye-i fesâdın esbâb-ı icraiyesini teheyyü zımnında bazı ifal ve tedabire teşebbüs eyledikleri ve bazıları 'aleyhine adam sevk ve istihdâm etmek gibi hâlâta dahi mütecasir oldukları beyânıyla…"*

returning to Kurdistan.[209] The events of 1898 were also considered as a revolt in the secondary literature.[210]

It is not just this letter, but also a series of earlier events that had caused this trial. It was the same year that Bedirxanis begun to publish the newspaper *Kurdistan* in Egypt which openly criticized the Hamidian regime. Thus it was considered as a harmful publication and its circulation in the Ottoman territories was prohibited by the state.[211] Family members who were living in Istanbul were under the pressure of the state since the *Kurdistan* determined to continue its publication. The Palace aimed at the return of Abdurrahman Beg who was the editor of the journal, by exercising power over the family members who were settled in Istanbul.

The most interesting side of this trial was the defense of the Bedirxan Pashazades. After the interrogation of the family members, the examiners (*mustantik*) declared the verdict of non-prosecution (*men-i mahkeme).* The decree of the examiners asserted that the whole scenario including the preparation of the letter, the *jurnal* of Ömer Efendi and the capture of Mustafa Efendi in Samsun were intentionally planned by the family members. In their defense the Bedirxan Pashazades claimed that their earlier petitions about their unjust treatment by some officers had been neglected. Therefore, in order to reach the Sultan they had planned such a scenario since they had thought that such a letter would capture the attention of the palace.[212] The public prosecutor (*Müdde-i Umumiye*) of the court of first

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[209] Bletch Schirguh (Celadet Bedirhan), "Kürt Sorununun Kökeni Ve Nedenleri," in *Açık - Gizli / Resmi - Gayr-I Resmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri* ed. Mehmet Bayrak (Ankara: Özge, 1930).

[210] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 118.

[211] Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, pp. 128-31.

[212] BOA, Y.PRK.AZN 19/90

instance (*Bidâyet mahkemesi*) and appeals court (*mahkeme-i istinaf*) also agreed with the decisions of the examiners (*mustantıks*). After a long discussion between different parts of the Ottoman Court, the Committee of Accusation (*Heyet-i Ithamiye*) decided that they should be judged in the Court of Murder according to the article 58th of the Ottoman Penal Code (*Ceza Kânunnamesi*).[213] In general, after the decision of the Committee of Accusation the court should have begun within 24 hours, and if prisoners were returned a verdict of guilty, the case would be brought to the Supreme Court (*Temyiz Mahkemesi*).[214] However, the archives do not give further information related to the case after the decision of the Committee of Accusation.

While the case was in process, some family members wrote petitions to the palace requesting that the case would have been carried out in a fair way. In a petition written by the wives of the Bedirxanis, they claimed that their husbands were under the torture of the officials and if their trial was not handled with justice they had to apply to the foreign consulates.[215]

It is not certain to what extent these petitions accelerated the process of the case. However, at the end, Abdulhamid II interfered the case and forgave Emin Ali, Yusuf Kamil, Ali Şâmil, Murat Remzi, Hasan and Mustafa Nuri.[216] It is possible that the palace was afraid of a foreign intervention to the case. Such an intervention might take the attention of the foreign powers and also might make the issue more political. It seems that it was the last attempt of Bedirxan Pashazades in returning to Kurdistan

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[213] BOA, Y.PRK.AZN 19/90 See also article 58 of the Ottoman Penal Code; Ahmet Akgündüz, *Mukayeseli Islam Ve Osmanlı Hukuku Külliyatı* (Diyarbakır: Dicle Universitesi Hukuk Fakultesi Yayınları 1986), p. 843.

[214]Fatmagül Demirel, *Adliye Nezareti Kuruluşu Ve Faliyetleri (1876-1914)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi universitesi Yayınları, 2007), pp. 254-58.

[215] BOA, Y.PRK. AZJ, 37/82, (1316.CA.2)

[216] BOA, BEO, 1240/92971, (1316.B.28)

which was again prevented by the palace.

Up to now, what I have tried to do is to show how different members of the Bedirxani family attempted to gain their power and influence in Cezire and Bohtan by involving in different alliances with the tribes of the region in different occasions. The Revolt of 1878, their struggle against Hamidian Regiments, and the case of 1898 clearly reveal that they had a certain influence among the tribes of the Cezire and Bohtan even as they were living in the western territories of the Empire. From late 1890's, while they were establishing contacts with the Young Turk Movement in Egypt and Europe, their struggle gained a new dimension. In the coming section, I will investigate the involvement of the Bedirxan Pashazades in the Young Turk movement and their struggle against Hamidian absolutism.

Political Thoughts of the Bedirxan Pashazades and Contacts with the "Young Turks"

The engagement of the Bedirxan Pashazades with the politics of the empire corresponds to the years when the "Young Turk" opposition movement against the Hamidian regime was in growth. Their early reactions to the Hamidian Regime mostly derived from the desire to revive old Cezire and Bohtan emirate, or at least get the privileges which Bedirxan Beg had enjoyed before the Tanzimat. But from the late 1890s they met with new "repertoire of contentions" while they were establishing contacts with the Young Turk movement. Several Bedirxan Pashazades including Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat, Mehmed Salih and Osman Pasha joined the Young Turks in Egypt and in Europe whose immediate goal was to dethrone

Abdulhamid II and to establish a parliamentary rule.[217] Above mentioned members of the Bedirxani family, actively supported Young Turk movement, believing in the fact that, with an alternative regime they could return to Cezire and Bohtan, gain their lost power and could work for social, material and cultural progress of the Kurds.

However, it was not only their concerns about the Kurds but also their social background which accelerated their involvement in the Young Turk movement. They were the individuals of the Tanzimat era heavily influenced by the social and political developments of the nineteenth century. Abdurrahman and Mikdat Midhat, who actively participated in the oppositional movement, received their education in theMekteb-i Sultani[218] and also took important positions in the "civil administration" of the state. In 1894 Mikdat Bedirxan was working as a member of the City Council of Istanbul (*Şehremaneti Meclis Azalığı*) and Abdurrahman Bedirxan was working as *Headclerk [Başkatib]* in the Ministry of Education.[219] They were typical Ottoman intellectuals who felt themselves responsible for enlightening their community. In line with this, they found a chance of escaping abroad where they started to publish *Kurdistan* (1898-1902) which is known as the first Kurdish newspaper, first by Mikdat Midhat in Egypt, and then by Abdurrahman in different cities of the Europe

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[217] According to M. Şükrü Hanioğlu until 1908, Young Turk "movement had possessed the peculiar characteristic of being a political opposition movement that had no clear political aims other than replacing the sultan's regime with a parliamentary one. Parliamentary government was not in itself the most important aspect of the Young Turks' ideal regime; indeed under the strong influence of European elitist theories of the late nineteenth century, they tended to look down on a parliament as a heterogeneous crowd" : M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution, the Young Turks 1902-1908* (Oxford, Newyork: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 3. And see also: Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*.

[218] Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, pp. 11, 107.

[219] Ibid.

until 1902. [220] Most of the writings penned by these two Kurds openly demonstrate that, they were heavily influenced by western thoughts related to the enlightenment and positivism. Both Mikdat's and Abdurrahman's articles determined to enlighten their community which according to them had been living in ignorance and backwardness because of Hamidian despotism.

At this point it would be necessary to give a short account of Abdurrahman Bedirxan in order to shed light both on the thoughts of a Kurdish intellectual of the era and Bedirxans's relationships with the CUP. Abdurrahman remained in Europe between the years of 1898 and 1905. While publishing *Kurdistan* in different cities of Europe including Folkston and Geneva he had established close relationship with the Young Turks, and especially with Abdullah Cevdet, who were organized under the name of the Ottoman Union and Progress Society (OCUP). Political ideas of the Abdurrahman Bedirxan did not differ too much from the ones of the Young Turks. The common point among these circles was their oppositional position to the corrupted administration of the Hamidian regime and to desire to replace it with an alternate one. Even, Hanioğlu argues that, *Kurdistan* while under the editorship of the Abdurrahman Bedirxan was accepted as one of the publications of the CUP besides the *Osmanlı* and *Beberuhi*.[221] Two Kurdish members of the CUP, "Abdullah Cevdet and Ishak Sukuti were also writing in *Kurdistan,* which sometimes displayed an ethnic viewpoint".[222] Moreover, *Osmanlı,* an official newspaper of the Young Turks,

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[220] *Kurdistan* was first published by Mikdat Mithad Bedirxan in 1898 in Cairo, then because of the pressure through consulates and also financial problems continued its publication in Geneva, London, Folkston and Cairo until 1902 under the editorship of Abdurrahman Bedirxan. M. Emîn Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, vol. I.

[221] Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, p. 117.

[222] Ibid., p. 169.

published several articles on Kurds and Bedirxan Pashazades.[223] In addition to this, Abdurrahman Bedirxan helped to the publication of *İctihad*, an anti- Hamidian journal published by Abdullah Cevdet.[224]

Compared to the other members of the Bedirxani Family, Abdurrahman Bedirxan was intellectually and politically the most productive one. Although several other members of the family joined the political and intellectual life of the empire, he was the most active one who may be deserved to be called as an "intellectual." Besides his several articles published in *Kurdistan* he also had a short booklet published in 1900, in which he criticized policy of the Abdulhamid II in bringing Kurds and Armenians against each other.[225] He also translated articles from European languages into Ottoman-Turkish which are published in *İctihad*.[226] These texts also enable us to learn more about his political and intellectual stance.

Being an Ottoman citizen of Kurdish descent, he was always between these two identities. He was an Ottoman elite since he took his education in modern Tanzimat Schools, and was employed in the upper ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy. He joined the Young Turks and was politically active for the survival of the empire. But he was also a primordial-romantic Kurdish nationalist since he was proud of his Kurdish identity and glorified the times of the old Cezire and Bohtan emirate in which he thought that everything was better than his time. Although at first glance, such a duality seems contradictory, this was not just peculiar to the Abdurrahman

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[223] Demir and Bozkurt, "Osmanlı Gazetesi Ve Kürtler."

[224] Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution, the Young Turks 1902-1908*, p. 59.

[225] Abdurrahman Bedirhan, "Belge; Kürdistan Ayaklanması," in *Toplum Ve Kuram, Lêkolîn Û Xebatên Kurdi*, ed. Serhat Bozkurt and Mesut Serfiraz (2010). See also: Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*.

[226] Abdurrahman Bedirhan, Ruh-ı Nisa, İctihad, 1 Eylül 1904, p. 10 "Maryon's(?) "The Spirit of Women" was tranlated by him in Ottoman Turkish.

Bedirxan. As Bülent Bilmez argues in the case of Şemsettin Sami Frasheri, there was "no notion of the domination of a single individual, single ethnicity and single nation at that period rather the mixed and more importantly multiple identities were the case".[227]

In order to clarify this issue it will be better to focus on some of Abdurrahman Bedirxan's articles published in *Kurdistan*. Most of the articles penned by him in *Kurdistan* were written through an Ottomanist vision. According to Abdurrahman Bedirxan, the Kurds should be loyal to the Ottoman Sultans, although claiming that such a loyalty could only be possible through an impartial administration.[228] However in some articles, he showed his desire of a self ruled Kurdistan. In one of his articles he claimed that "once Kurds had their own governments (*hukûmet*) and made their decisions, but now we have lost our happiness and we are being ruled by clowns. (…) Our leader can be a Kurd. Why should we remain under the hegemony of the Turks?"[229]

In order to have a grasp of his relations with Ottoman and Kurdish identities, it will be better to focus on what he understood from the words homeland [wetan or welat which can also be translated into "country" in English] and "nation" [millet][230] It seems that Abdurrahman Bedirxan used the word homeland not only to refer to the territories of the Ottoman Empire but also to Kurdistan. In one of his articles on

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[227]Bülent Bilmez, "Modern Ve Geleneksel Kolektif Kimlikler Ile Osmanlı Vatandaşlığı Arasında; Osmanlı Aydını Üzerine Notlar," *Toplumsal Tarih* 20, no. 182 (2009).

[228] Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, pp. 295-96.

[229] M. Emîn Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898 - 1902*, vol. II, p. 473.

[230] See how Âşûr Yûsuf and Naûm Fâik uses the words "nation" and "millet" : Benjamin Oliver Sunny Trigona Harany, "Intibâh or Hâb-ı Gaflet : Âşûr Yûsuf, Naûm Faîk and the Ottoman Süryânî " (Boğaziçi University, 2008) pp. 81-85. This study inspired me to question how Kurdish intellectuals defined the words 'nation' and 'millet'.

Hamidian Regiments, he continues as such: "in order to investigate the oppression and cruelties in Kurdistan, a corner of our homeland…" Here the word "homeland" (vatan) refers to the territories of the Ottoman Empire and Kurdistan was regarded as a part of it. However in other articles published in *Kurdistan* he uses the same word (welat) in such a way;

> Kurds! You should know the fact that if government officials in your homeland (*welat*) become unjust, your homeland will not remain in your hands. Now Kurdistan is being ruled by Turks, by Abdulhamid. The officials who govern you are lead by Abdulhamid. (…) But you are the real owners of the Kurdistan.
>
> Or
>
> 500 years ago there were no Turks in our country. The Turks, who came from Turan, have been ruling us in our homeland *(welat)*. Their sultans, who are blood shedder despots, are entitled with the "caliph" and used it to justify every kind of cruelty.[231]

Now for Abdurrahman Bedirxan, the "homeland" (welat or wetan) refers to Kurdistan a region which according to him was mostly inhabited by the Kurds for centuries. In another article about Crete, he used the word in such a way; "we had a country which is pretty nice; it is Crete…"[232] Here the word "homeland" refers to another part of Ottoman Empire inhabited by Muslims and Christians located in western territories of the Empire. It is clearly understandable that the word "homeland" both used to refer to the Ottoman Empire and Kurdistan or any other part of empire like Cretan. Although some of the Kurdish intellectuals used the word

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[231] Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898 - 1902*, p. 472. "*Beri penc sed sala tu Tirkek li welatê me de nebî. Ev Tirk hemî ji Tûran hatin welatê me, û welatê me de hakimîyê di me dikin. Padişahen wan, ku hemi xwinrej mustebid in, unwanê "xelife" li xwe datinin û bî wî halî, çı qasî new'e zulm heye icra dikin"*See also : Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, p. 135.

[232] Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, p. 202.

"vatan-ı asli" (the original homeland) in order to refer to Kurdistan[233], I have not came across such a distinction in the texts of Abdurrahman Bedirxan.[234]

The same case can also be seen in the word "nation" (*millet*). He used the word *millet* not only to refer to the Kurds but also to the Ottomans. According to Abdurrahman Bedirxan, Kurds are one of the important "*millets"* of the Empire, just like Kurdistan as being an indispensable part of the empire.[235] But it was deteriorating, and becoming more backward. The backwardness and ignorance among Kurds were because of the corrupted Hamidian regime. Thus in order to fight with this backwardness and ignorance and to provide justice and security, Kurds should raise their voices. The government should take the voices of the Kurds into consideration; otherwise Kurdistan would be easily occupied by Russia.[236] This would not only lead to the disappearance of Kurdistan, but also loss of an important part of the Ottoman and Muslim world. Thus his opposition against the Hamidian Regime was shaped from two sides. As an Ottoman he saw the Hamidian regime as an obstacle in the modernization and survival of the Empire, as a Kurd he saw Hamidian rule as being responsible of the backwardness and ignorance that prevailed in Kurdistan.

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[233] Gülseren Duman, "The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(S) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism" (MA, Boğaziçi University, 2010), p. 117.

[234]Şemseddin Sami also made such a disinction by using the word "Vatan-ı umûmi" to refer Ottoman Empire and "Vatan-ı hususi" to refer Albania. See: Ahmet Ersoy, "Şemseddin Sami: Turkish Lexicon," in *Discourses of Collective İdentity in Central and Southeast Europe*, ed. Maciej Gorny Ahmet Ersoy, Vangelis Kechriotis (Budapest Newyork: CEU Press, 2010), p. 36.

[235] He also uses *anasır* (element), *kavim* and xelk (people) while talking about Kurds or any other ethnicities of empire.

[236] Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, pp. 227-28.

In most of his open letters to the Sultan he aimed to draw the attention of the palace to the corrupted administration in Kurdistan.[237] The early letters of him written in *Kurdistan* did not directly target the Sultan. They were written in a conciliatory manner to draw the attention of the Sultan to the affairs of Kurdistan and to remove the ban on the circulation of the periodical. His early articles mostly targeted the officials of the palace. Since demands of the intellectuals were neglected, the language of such letters became sharper, even targeting Abdulhamid II, in the following issues.[238]

Abdurrahman Bedirxan as an educated Kurd who aimed to reach the Kurds not only to make them aware of the corrupted administration of the empire but also to motivate them to deal with science and education (*ilm ve maarif*). Like many "Young Turks," he was a man of enlightenment and devoted his energy for the material and cultural progress of the Kurds. The concepts of the enlightenment such as "education" and "science" were seen as a necessity for the progress of the Kurds and also for getting rid of the backwardness and ignorance among them which had prevailed during the Hamidian Regime. According to him, appealing to education and giving importance to science were also necessary since it was the duty of all the Muslims of the world, since God had ordered humans to be educated and also since Muslims were under the threat of powerful countries. In most of the articles in order to lead the Kurds to education and science, many *hadiths* and verses of Quran were used.

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[237] Such open letters took a signifact role in the politics of the Kurds not only during the late Ottoman Empire but also during the early years of the Turkish Republic. See: Celadet Alî Bedirxan, *Türkiye Reisicumhuru Gazi. M. Kemal Paşa Hazretlerine Açık Mektup* (Ankara: Komal Yayınları, 1978). Muş'lu Şabanzade Hilmi Yıldırım, "Kürdistan'da Yirminci Asırda Türklerin Medeniyeti," in *Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, ed. Mehmet Bayrak (Ankara: 2004, 2004).

[238] Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*.

In order to get rid of backwardness and ignorance, the government should build schools and madrasahs in the region. And if the government had not, Kurds should have sent repeated petitions in order to take the attention of the state. While talking about the rights of the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire, he gave several examples from Albania and Albanian struggle for their "national rights" and their successes. In an article published in Kurdistan in 1898, he argued that;

> Albanians were like you (The Kurds) without schools and medreses. Their journals (*pelek*) made them pull themselves together. They wrote to the sultan and made him open schools and medreses for them. They sent their children to schools to be educated and trained. They set the thames on fire and suffered a lot until they succeeded in realizing their aims. Don't be scared of suffering. (…) Work hard until you achieve the improvement of your country (*welat*).[239]

Throughout his political life in Europe even after his return to Istanbul he paid attention to the Armenian – Kurdish conflicts and the possible solutions. Abdurrahman Bedirxan began to write in a period in which Kurdish tribes engaged in several massacres against the Armenian population in different parts of the eastern provinces including the terrible events in Sason in 1895. In his articles published in *Kurdistan* he warned Kurdish tribal leaders in their attacks against Armenians and called them to act with their Armenian brothers against the despotism of the Hamidian regime which was seen as the main reason of the conflicts. At first stance it is clearly understandable that his sensitivity was shaped by his Ottomanist inclinations. As an Ottoman intellectual he was in favor of the brotherhood of these two elements (*anâsır*) for the survival of the Empire.

Another important point related to the Armenians was the fear of an Armenian state on the territories that Kurds lived. This issue, as going to be shown in the fourth

[239] Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, p. 201. See Appendix K (Document 10) for the modern Kurdish transcription of the text.

chapter, was always a matter of debate between the Kurds and the Armenians. Abdurrahman Bedirxan as a Kurdish - Ottoman intellectual was against the establishment of an Armenian state. He was not only against it because of his "Ottoman identity", but also because of the fear that an Armenian state would lead to the disappearance of Kurdistan. Because of his "multiple identities" he was not politically in favor of an Armenian state. In one of the articles published in 1898, in the *Kurdistan*, he claimed that;

> Kurdish people! Once look at your own situation then to your neighboring people of *Moskov*. Kurds are the same as they were a thousand years ago. Their neighbors have developed skills and crafts and have had their states. Kurds have remained weak and helpless. All of the great powers have said that they would give Kurdistan to the Armenians. (…) Now the Non-Muslim great states claim that "as Kurds are ignorant, skillless and without craft, it would be a pity for the Armenians to go under the rule of the Kurds; so Kurdistan would be the Armenians.[240]

Not only his contacts with the Young Turks but also his concerns about the Kurds worried the palace. Hanioğlu argues that Abdurrahman made a deal with palace and returned to Istanbul. However it was not only Abdurrahman Bedirxan but also several other Young Turks returned to Istanbul by persuasion of the palace.[241]

Although Abdurrahman Bedirxan was the most productive and outstanding Kurd opposing the Hamidian regime he was not the only one who joined the "Young Turk" oppositional movement among the Bedirxani family. For instance, Mehmed Salih Bedirxan who was born in Lazkiye in 1873 and completed his education in Damascus and Jerusalem joined the oppositional movement in Egypt at the turn of

[240] Ibid., pp. 198-99. See Appendix K (Document 11) for the modern Kurdish transcpiton of the text.

[241] Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution, the Young Turks 1902-1908* p. 59. See also: Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, p. 36.

the twentieth century. He was a member of the CUP's Egyptian branch[242] and published a newspaper called *Ümid* (Hope) there, in 1900.[243] Although only one issue of the newspaper is available, it seems that like *Kurdistan* it also published articles which opposed the Hamidian regime. In the second issue of the *Ümid,* he criticized the ones who joined the celebrations organized because of the 25th anniversary of the Abdulhamid II's coming to the throne and mentioned about the cruelties of the Hamidian regime and how he did not keep his words of providing the Constitution and Parliament and of removing the ban on the publications.[244] Like *Kurdistan* the circulation of *Ümid* in the Ottoman territories was prohibited by the palace.[245] Although it is not clear when he was arrested, Salih Bedirxan remained in jail until 1908 Revolution, because of the accusation of establishing a Secret Organization *(Cemiyet-i Hafiye).*[246]

Another member of the Bedirxani Family, Osman Pasha, as mentioned in this chapter, who had organized a revolt against the empire in 1878, had also connections with the CUP. However, it seems that his relations with the "Young Turks" lasted very short. In 1900 he arrived in London. Not much latter it was reported that he aimed to pass Egypt then go to Kurdistan in order to prepare a revolt against the sultan as mentioned in the newspaper "Bavel Matin."[247] While he was in Cairo he joined to the CUP's Egyptian branch. Although it is not clear to what extent he was

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[242]Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, p. 164. Hanioğlu mentions a name "Mahmud Bedirhanzâde" who joined the CUP's Egyptian branch, but it should be Mehmed Bedirhanzâde.

[243] BOA, Y.PRK. UM 51/70, (13.Ca 1318)

[244] Jübileye Yadigar "Yahud" Utanmayan kimdir?, *Ümid*, no: 2, 2.Cumede'levvel 1318 (28 August 1900), p. 1

[245] BOA, MF. MKT 527/12, (27.Ca 1318)

[246] Bedir-han, *Defter-ı A'malım : Mehmet Salih Bedir-Han'ın Anıları*, p. 85.

[247] BOA, Y.PRK.HR 29/59

active in this organization, palace was worried about his existence in Cairo. Thus Abdulhamid II attempted to make him return. Although after several negotiations he was convinced to return Istanbul, he was imprisoned upon his arrival.[248] During his imprisonment he had petitioned for his pardon and also demanded his old position.[249] Although he was "forgiven" by the palace in April 1904, it was also decided that he should be sent to Tripoli.[250]

The Bedirxan Pashazades were not the only circles among the Kurds who had opposed Abdulhamid II. A telegraph from the Paris embassy had urged the palace to be cautious about two publications, *Siham-ı Sahibe* and *İmdada,* which were published by the Kurds in Egypt and invited the Kurdish population to rebel against the Sultan.[251] Egypt, at the turn of the century, became a place where most of the opposing Kurdish intellectuals met. Fatmagül Demirel argues that "although Hamidian regime attempted to prevent the growing influence of the oppositional groups, it could not prevent the influence of groups that were shaped in Egypt which was *de facto* under the control of the Europe and Britain."[252] Most of the Kurds who opposed to the Hamidian regime seems to be politically active in Egypt until 1908 and the palace aimed to limit their actions during the mentioned process. Even it was reported that Kurds in Egypt were in connection with Armenian organizations.

To sum up, Bedirxan Pashazade Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat, Osman and

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[248] BOA, Y.PRK.ASK 183/34 (1320. R. 2)

[249] BOA, Y.MTV 234/196 (1320. C.28) See also BOA, Y.MTV 256/31

[250] BOA, Y.MTV 259/91

[251] BOA, Y.PRK. EŞA. 36/48 (1318.Ca.5) "*Kürdistan ahâlîsinden ve Mekteb-i Mülkiye ve Hukuk talebesinden idüğü ve Mısır'dan geldiği beyânıyla bugün sefâret-i seniyeye mürâcaat iden Arif namında biri bütün Kürd aşâirini zat-ı efendi hazret-i padişahi ''aleyhinde kıyâm ve isyan ettirmekle beraber…"*

[252]Fatmagül Demirel, *Ii. Abdülhamid Devrinde Sansür* (Istanbul: Sağlam Yayınları, 2007).

Mehmed Salih, as Kurdish intellectuals actively supported the Young Turk movement with which they had many common points. Hanioğlu argues that "Young Turk movement was unquestionably a link in the chain of the Ottoman modernization movement as well as representing the modernist wing of the Ottoman bureaucracy."[253] They saw themselves as reformist intellectuals who determined to work for the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and saw Hamidian absolutism as main obstacle. This also clearly reveals itself in the writings of Abdurrahman, Mikdat and Mehmed Salih, which were published in *Kurdistan* and *Umid*. They were western inspired Kurdish intellectuals who aimed to enlighten Kurdish community by mentioning the importance of science and education by giving examples from the western world.

Bedirxan Pashazades sincerely believed in the fact that, CUP was the only power which could give an end to the despotic regime of the Abdulhamid II. They thought that if the Young Turks could reconsolidate the constitution, and remove the ban on freedom of expression and right of organization, they could involve in the political life in Kurdistan and also could work for the material and educational progress of the Kurds which are also necessary for the survival and modernization of the empire. However as going to be handled in the next chapter after the consolidation of the Constitution, things did not develop as they had been expected. Although most of the Bedirxanis preserved their pre CUP positions in the first years of the Second Constitutional era, in the following years they began opposing the CUP by pursuing different ideologies. Yet before passing to the next chapter, I will briefly mention a tragic event that resulted with the exile of all family members in 1906.

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[253] Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*.

Rıdvan Pasha Incident and the Exile of the Bedirxanis

In March 1906, the mayor of Istanbul, Ismail Rıdvan Pasha (1852-1906), was killed by a group of Kurds. Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, Ali Şâmil, Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat, Hasan, Halil and several other family members were considered as the organizers of the assassination. This event was the most well known event related to the Bedirxan Pashazades since it resulted in exile of the all of the family members living in the empire.[254] The murder of Rıdvan Pasha is a complicated issue since different stories had been told about it. According to Ahmed Ramiz, who had written the history of the Bedirxan Pashazades, it was because of the old disputes between Abdurrezzak Bedirxan and Rıdvan Pasha which had reached its peak after a conflict about the construction of the road passing in front of Abdurrezzak's house.[255] Court reports also support the statement of Ahmed Ramiz. In the mentioned report it was noted that Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had demanded the construction of the pavement passing in front of his house in Şişli from Ahmed Ağa (who was the secretary of the Rıdvan Pasha). Ahmed Ağa, who had refused the demand, was imprisoned and tortured by Abdurrezzak and his brothers Said and Bedirhan in Şişli. In return, Rıdvan Pasha sent some of porters and officials working in the municipality in order to rescue the imprisoner. When they reached Şişli the debate immediately turned into an armed conflict. During the fight Bedirhan (Brother of Abdurrezzak) get

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[254] For a detailed study on Rıdvan Pasha incident see; Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, pp. 36-80., Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek*, pp. 96-106, Sevgen, *Doğu Ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri: Osmanlı Belgeleri Ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi*, pp. 119-34.

[255] Grubu, *Emir Bedirhan, Lütfî (Ahmet Ramiz) 20. Yüzyılın Başlarında Kürt Milliyetçi Söylemine Bir Örnek*, pp. 96-97.

wounded.[256] An article in *Times* under the title of "*The Fall of Bedr Khans*" confirms the information given by Ahmed Ramiz and also the court statement that the fight began because of the road construction. [257]

However, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan in his memoirs stressed the political aspect of the plot. He had argued that by killing Rıdvan Pasha he wished to create a conflict in Istanbul, which would enable them to depose the sultan.[258] In the aforementioned court report it is also noted that Bedirxan Pashazades had armed the Kurds in order to defend themselves against the men of Rıdvan Pasha, but in reality they were in preparation for a revolt (*ika-yı ihtilâl*) in Istanbul.[259] It is not clear that what the court report implies by claiming that they were in preparation of *ihtilâl*. However it is necessary to be careful about referring to the court report since after the Consolidation of the Constitution, Bedirxan Pashazades defined the court prepared in Tripoli as unfair.[260]

Even though hundreds of Kurds were exiled because of the murder of Rıdvan Pasha, it is interesting that the incident did not take enough place in the daily newspapers of the Empire. It is most probably because of the ban on newspapers. *Sabah*, explained the event as the consequence of personal conflicts. A few days

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[256] BOA, BEO 2837/ 212717

[257] The Fall of Bedr Khans, *The Times,* 23 August 1906. The murder of Rıdvan Pasha aslo mentioned in Figaro (13 June 1906) see: Sevgen, *Doğu Ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri: Osmanlı Belgeleri Ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi*, p. 128-29. And also in London (1 April 1906) and London (6 April 1906)

[258] Abdurrezzak Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya* (Ankara: Peri Yayınları, 2000).

[259] BOA, BEO, 2837/ 212717 *"ve şu vesile ile zahiren Rıdvan Paşa merhumun adamlarına karşı bir zemin-i müdafa'-i a'dadi ve hakikat-i halde ise paytaht-i saltanat-ı seniyede ika-yı ihtilâl içun bir mukaddime-i fesâdiye ihzarı emrinde yirmiye karib eslihâ ve birçok mermiyi ber minval-i meşru' tevzi'"*

[260] Bedirhanemirzade Hasan, Halil, Midhat Abdurrahman, "Adliye Nezâret-i Aliyesine Verilen İstida' Sûretidir", *Kürdistan*, no 5, 26 Safer 327, (19 March 1909)

later, *Tuna*, a newspaper opposing the Hamidian regime, stated that Rıdvan Pasha was not only a well-known robber, but also a spy (*curnalci)*. Even it stated that "one wishes the same would happen to his friends" (*darısı rüfekasının… başına*).[261]

Although Abdurrezzak and Ali Şâmil were primarily seen as organizers of the assassination, all of the Bedirxanis and also some of the Kurds living in Istanbul were exiled in different parts of the empire.[262] Malmisanij detected 178 people in Ottoman sources who were exiled.[263] Moreover, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan in his memoirs argues that 3000 Kurds were exiled in the empire because of the Rıdvan Pasha incident. Although the number given by Abdurrezzak is exaggerated, even the ones who had connections with family members were exiled by the palace. So it will be better to ask why the Sultan decided to exile all the members of the family even the ones who were living out of Istanbul. It can be argued that the palace saw the incident as a chance in order to get rid of the family members who had really become influential in the social and political life of the empire and especially that of Istanbul. The court which was held in Tripoli also took their "political actions" into consideration while judging them. It was claimed that both Midhat and Abdurrahman had engaged in harmful publications in foreign countries, Halil Rahmi and Abdurrezzak had engaged in a revolt *(tarik-i isyan)* by escaping to Hakkari and Van, others like Ali Şâmil and Hasan also had a bad reputation.

As mentioned above some of the Bedirxanis had already participated in political activities against the Sultan. The ones like Abdurrahman, Mikdat Midhat and Mehmet Salih had established contacts with the young Turks and supported their

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[261] Sabah, 11 Mart 1322, "Rıdvan Paşa'nın Katl-i itlafı," *Tuna*, (13 Mart 1322)

[262] Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, p.38.

[263] Ibid.

activities as mentioned in this chapter. They also attempted to return to Kurdistan many times which also resulted in their trial and imprisonment. It was also a time in which "Kurdish nationalism" began to show itself among the Kurds of Istanbul. Thus their ethnic identity also posed a threat to the regime. It is also possible that the Sultan got afraid of such an incident since he had once experienced a suicide attempt. Another important point is their conflicts with the Ottoman bureaucracy in Istanbul. Their growing political and social influence in Istanbul had worried not only the Sultan but also some officials in Istanbul. The article published in the *Times* mentions the growing influence of the Bedirxan Pashazades in Istanbul and the disaffection and fear of the Ottoman officials because of this situation. According to the article after the murder of Rıdvan Pasha, a rumor was circulating around that "their [Bedirxan Pashazades'] plans had embraced the murder of nearly all the leading Ministers and Palace dignitaries and the establishment of Kurdish control over the personal service of sultan and the government of country."[264]

In general Kurdish notables who were seen as a "problem" by the state were exiled to the center where the state had a capacity to control the actions of them. Nevertheless, because of the growing political and social influence of the Bedirxanis in Istanbul, the government now exiled them out of the borders of Istanbul. However it also should be noticed that none of them were exiled to the Kurdish region. For instance it was claimed that Osman Pasha should not be sent to Aleppo since the region was close to the Diyarbekir and since it was settled by the Kurds. [265] From 1906 to 1908 several members of family remained in exile or imprisonment in

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[264] The Fall of Bedr Khans, *The Times,* 23 August 1906 (Thanks Djene Rhys Bajalan in providing me a copy of this article.)

[265] BOA, BEO, 2796/209652 "*Bedirhanilerden Osman Paşa'nın Haleb'e sürülmesinin orada Kürd aşâiri bulunması ve Haleb'in Diyarbakır'a hemhudud olması mahzûruna binaen Trablusgarb'da kalması.*"

different parts of the empire.

CHAPTER IV

POWER RELATIONS AND NATIONALISM DURING THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

This chapter will cover the changing relations between the Kurdish notables and intellectuals and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) by focusing on the political and cultural activities of the Bedirxani family between the years 1908 and 1914. In other words the established relations, conflicts, conciliations and the shifts in political discourses are going to be discussed by focusing on certain cases like the declaration of the Second Constitution, the Elections of 1912, the Armenian reform program, the Bitlis Revolt (1914) and also the approaching World War. In this chapter, I will try to show how the Bedirxan Pashazades who during the late Hamidian era were members and supporters of the CUP turned against it by pursuing different political agendas during the II Constitutional period.

Kurds and the Second Constitutional Period

Like many circles in the Ottoman Empire, the Constitutional Period had significant implications for the Kurdish intelligentsia. After the declaration of the II Constitution on 23rd July 1908, a general amnesty was declared for the "political criminals" who were in exile or imprisoned in different parts of the empire. Like most of the political circles, Kurdish political activists also got the chance to return to Istanbul and were immediately involved in political and cultural activities of the period. Most of the Kurdish intellectuals and political activists were in favor of the new constitution, since they could engage in political and cultural life of the empire and could speak

freely and spread their ideas. Since the censorship was removed by the CUP, the emerging freedom of expression led to a dramatic increase in the number of the publications. The early years of the new regime was a period of proliferation of the Kurdish clubs, organizations and publications.[266] The newly returned personas who belonged to prominent Kurdish families and also the urban Kurdish circles who were silent during the reign of Abdulhamid II, applied to the government in order to establish several Kurdish clubs, schools and to start publications.

Kürd Teâvün ve Terakkî Cemiyeti (Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress) (KTTC, after that) was the first and most influential Kurdish club that was opened by Sheikh Abdulkadir (Son of Sheikh Ubeydullah) and Müşir Ahmed Paşa after the declaration of the Second Constitution.[267] The club also published a newspaper called *Kürd Teâvün ve Terakkî Gazetesi* (Journal of Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress), (*KTTG*, after that) in Istanbul which not only published articles on Kurdish culture and society, but also about the political changes brought by the Constitutional rule and its reflections on Kurds.

In the early years of the Second Constitutional Period, most of the Kurdish intellectuals had great sympathies for the CUP since they thought that such a free atmosphere was the outcome of CUP's struggle. Several Kurdish writers of the KTTG or members of the KTTC like İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, Süleyman Nazif and Pirinçizade Feyzi were also members and supporters of the Committee of Union and

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[266] This cultural and political organizations had been subject of several studies. See: Bajalan, *Jön Kürtler Birinci Dünya Savaşından Önce Kürt Hareketi*, Duman, "The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(S) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism", Emine Rezzan Karaman, "Femininity within the Context of Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries" (M.A, Boğaziçi University, 2008). and Janet Klein, "Kurdish Nationalists and Nonnationalist Kurdists: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire,1908–1909," *Nation and Nationalism* 13, no. 1 (2007).

[267] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Iletişim 1998), p. 413. For more information about the members of this club see; Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün Ve Terakki Cemiyeti Ve Gazetesi*.

Progress. For instance, in the elections of 1908, the local branch of the KTTC in Diyarbekir supported CUP candidate, Pirinçizade Fevzi, a Kurd from Diyarbekir.[268] Even it was reported that the branch of the KTTC in Bitlis had joined the local organization of the CUP.[269] Although it is not clear whether any of the Bedirxani family had continued their membership in the CUP or joined directly to the Party during the first years of the Constitutional era, it is apparent that they had great sympathy for the Unionists and their struggle in bringing the Constitutional Rule.

During the first years of the Second Constitutional Period, contrary to the other prominent Kurdish families and intellectuals, the Bedirxanis did not engage extensively in the cultural and political activities of the above mentioned organization. Although it has been claimed in some sources that Emin Ali Bedirxan was one of the founders of the KTTC, it is not clear to what extent he had contributed to this organization. He was not as active as other Kurdish intellectuals. For instance there is not any article written by him or by other Bedirxan Pashazades in the official newspaper of *KTTC*.

Although it is not clear why none of the Bedirxanis joined this club, there are some possible answers. When constitutional rule was restored, influential members of the Bedirxani family like Mikdat Midhat, Abdurrahman, Halil and Hasan Beg had been still jailed in Tripoli[270] Since the family members were imprisoned because of the murder of Rıdvan Pasha, for a period they were not considered as political prisoners, so they did not benefit from the general amnesty. After their repeated petitions they were released in late December 1908. Even, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan,

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[268] Şâyân-ı Dikkat Bir Telgraf, Kürd Teâvün ve Terakki Gazetesi, no: 5, 20 Kânun-ı evvel 1324(3) in M. Emîn Bozarslan, ed., *Kürd Teavün Ve Terakki Gazetesi* (Uppsala: Deng Yayınevi, 1998),p. 246.

[269] Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 405.

[270] BOA, DH.MKT, 2681/82, (1326.Za.19)

upon whom most of the responsibility had been put, was not released until April 1910.[271] When the Bedirxanis returned from the exile, Sheikh Abdülkadir Nehrî had already established his domination in KTTC. As mentioned by Özoğlu there was a rivalry between the families of Bedirxani and Nehrî (which Sheikh Abdülkadir was from) for the leadership of the Kurdish community.[272] Sheikh Abdulkadir, not only because of his family background, but also because of his relations with the government as an elected Chamber of Notables [*Meclis-i 'Ayan*] became an influential figure in the KTTC. Second, it seems that the members of the Bedirxani family had a different political agenda than the ones who were active in KTTC. Two years after the declaration of the Second Constitutional era, Bedirxanis turned their face to the Kurdish region and devoted their energies there, which is going to be analyzed in this chapter.

Before focusing on Bedirxanis' activities in Kurdish vilâyets, it will be better to focus on their activities in Istanbul after their return from the exile. In 1908 Ahmed Süreyya, a young member of the Bedirxani family, applied to the government in order to publish two newspapers entiteled *Kurdistan* (both in Kurdish and Turkish)

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[271] BOA, BEO 3740/280481, (1328.R.19)

[272] This rivalry mostly reveals itself after the WWI, but can be seen in the early years of the constitution. See; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 93.

and *Aşîret* (*Tribe*) (in Turkish).[273] The application of Ahmed Süreyya was approved by the government and he began to publish *Kurdistan* in Istanbul probably in February 1909.[274] Most of the Bedirxanis who were in Istanbul were writing in the newspaper, including Hüseyin Kenan, Emin Ali, Mehmed Salih and Abdurrahman. Since there are only two issues (the third and fourth) of the newspaper available, it is not clear how many issues were published in total. Malmisanij argues that it was banned by the Unionists after the 31 March Incident and the editor, Ahmed Süreyya, was put in prison.[275]

I will briefly introduce some articles written in *Kurdistan* (1909) since it will give clues about the approaches of Bedirxan Pashazades to the constitutional government. First of all *Kurdistan* was a typical post-revolutionary newspaper. With great hopes, it saluted the constitutional government and repeatedly stressed the importance of the *fraternity* and *justice* in the Empire. The authors highlighted the importance of the unity of elements in the empire and the need of hardwork for the

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[273] BOA, DH. MKT 2651/48, 1326.K.14 ; "*(Kürdistan) namıyla bir tarafı Türkçe diğer tarafı Kürdçe olarak haftada bir defâ ve Aşîret namıyla sırf Türkçe olmak ve haftada iki defâ neşr edilmek üzere iki gazete içun ruhsât itası Bedirhanzâde Ahmed Süreyya Bey tarafından Nezâret-i celilelerine bi't-takdim idâre-i hâk-pâyı havâle buyurulan arzuhalde…"*

During the post-revolutionary era there was a boom in the number of the newspapers and journals printed among the different communities of the Empire. Kurds were not an exception. Besides the well known ones as Kürd Teâvün ve Terakki Gazetesi (1909), Kurdistan (1909), Roj-i Kurd (1913), Yekbûn (1913), Hetaw-i Kurd (1913) several attempts also made by the Kurdish intellectuals. For example: Müftîzade Reşid Efendi, applied for publishing a newspaper called as *Kürd* in 1908. See: BOA, ZB, 327/104, (1324.Te.21)

Hüseyin Kenan Bedirxan who was also one of writers of the *Kurdistan* (1909) attempted to establish a newspaper called as *Cudi* in 1910. See: Şaban Ortak Ahmet Ali Gazel, "İkinci Meşrutiyet'ten 1927 Yılına Kadaryayın İmtiyazı Alan Gazete Ve Mecmualar (1908-1927)."

Palutluzade Mehmed Halil Efendi from Kharput applied to the local government to get the permission to publish a newspaper called *Fuyûzât-ı Kurdiye.* See: BOA, DH.MKT, 2820/81, 1327.Ca.2 (22. May. 1909)

[274] The 3rd issue of Kurdistan is dated as 5 Safer 1327 (February 26, 1909) Since it was a weekly newspaper, it should be began to be published in February 1909.

[275] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 92.

survival of the Ottoman Empire. It can be clearly seen that like previous authors of *Kurdistan (1898-1902),* they were strongly committed to Ottomanism. Emin Ali Bedirxan in one of his articles published in *Kurdistan (1909)* stressed that now it was a new age of freedom and that everybody in the empire should unite and collaborate under the name of Ottomanness, and should not discriminate others by claiming that this is an Armenian or this is a Catholic and etc.[276] In the third issue of the newspaper, the Speech of Abdurrahman Bedirxan which he gave in one of the conferences led by *Tashnaksutyun* (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) was published. Abdurrahman Bedirxan argued that since Hamidian despotism ended with the bayonets of the army the Armenians and Kurds should unite and work for the progress of their homeland (the Ottoman Empire). [277] Bedirxan Pashazades regarded the constitutional era as a new age, an age of freedom in which different ethnicities should work for the progress of their communities in particular, and their empire in general.

In line with this aim, Bedirxan Pashazades not only tried to draw the attention of the new government to the affairs of Kurdistan, but also aimed to work for the material and cultural progress of their own community. This was also one of the aims and discourses of the previous *Kurdistan* (1898-1902) which had been published during the Hamidian era and other contemporary newspapers like the Newspaper for Kurdish Mutually Aid and Progress (1909). Like most of the pro-Kurdish newspapers of the time, it was a product of enlightenment and the authors repeatedly stressed the power of education in the progress of the nation. Another author Hüseyin

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[276] Lave Emir Bedirxan Emin Ali, "Ari Kırın Her Ari Kırın", *Kurdistan*, no, 3, 5 Safer 327 (26 February, 1909), pp.3-4

[277] "Bedirhan Paşazâde Abdurrahman Bey Efendi'nin İrad ettikleri Nutk-ı Baliğ", *Kurdistan*, no: 3, 5 Safer 1327, (26 February, 1909), pp. 2-3

Kenan in his article argued that since the scholars and intellectuals rescued themselves from the cruelties of the sultans and shahs, and since they were sure about their security, they could hereupon open schools and medreses and could learn about science, art and crafts.[278]

Union (*Ittifâk)* is one of the most repeated words of the newspaper. Authors urged Kurdish tribal leaders about the importance of unification in owning a wealthy, powerful, safe homeland (welat). While calling the Kurdish tribal leaders and aghas, the authors repeatedly emphasized the uselessness of inter-tribal conflicts and the importance of unification, development and education.[279] In an untitled article "What exists in Kurdistan?" it is stated that both the government and the wealthy Kurds should work together for the progress of Kurdistan. The article recommends construction of new roads and railways, establishment of factories, operation of mines in Kurdistan. Moreover it proposes the settling of tribes, opening of agricultural schools and teaching Kurds with new agricultural techniques. Thus with these developments not only the government could collect more taxes from the region, but also Kurdistan would prosper. Yet the government should be the pioneering actor in these investments, since the Kurds did not reach to the desired degree of civilization.[280]

In order to achieve the aims mentioned in their writings, most of the authors turned to their 'original homeland', Cezire and Bohtan in 1911. Before analyzing their activities in Kurdistan, it will be better firstly to focus on the policies of the

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[278] Lave Emir Bedirxan Hüseyin Kenan, "Ezmaline Meye Kurmanci", *Kurdistan*, no 3, 5 Safer 1327, (26 February, 1909), p.3

[279] Nasihata Malbata Emir Bedirxane ji bo hemû Kurda [i]ttifak ê., *Kurdistan*, no: 4 , 26 Safer 327 (19 March 1909), p. 4

[280] Kürdistan'da neler var?, *Kürdistan*, no 5, 26 Safer 327, (19 March 1909)

CUP in the Kurdish settled areas following the 1908 Revolution.

The CUP's Kurdish Policy

Since the policy of the CUP government in the Kurdish region produced new social and political relationships in Kurdish society, it will be better first to focus on the characteristics of this policy briefly. After the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid II, in April 1909, Ottoman administration arranged a new policy towards Kurdistan. The main objective of the CUP government was to consolidate state power in the region by establishing central systems of administration, taxation, education and recruitment which were considered to be neglected during the Hamidian era. Instead of negotiation with local powerholders to establish its rule of law, Cup government pursued a strict central policy in the region which mostly based on physical coercion. Central and local governments were well aware of the fact that the only way of increasing state power in the eastern provinces of the empire was through building state infrastructure in the region and subordinating the local authorities which had prevailed during Hamidian Era. Kurdish tribes, who were regarded as obstacles in the path of Ottoman "modernization" and "centralization", thus became the main target of the CUP government.

The "modernization" projects of the Ottoman reformers in the Kurdish provinces of the empire from the early Tanzimat era bear the marks of the "colonial projects" in many ways. Most of the Ottoman officials appointed to the administrative posts of the Kurdish provinces made a distinction between the "civilized" Ottoman center and "uncivilized" Kurdish provinces. From the perspective of the imperial government, a powerful central administration in

Kurdistan was immediately needed not only to bring "civilization" into the region, but also to increase "loyalty" of the Kurdish tribes to the state. Kurdish tribes which were regarded as culturally "inferior", "savage" and "uncivil" by these reformers, were also considered prone to any kind of deception by imperial Russia and it would be likely that there would be traitors among them. Thus bringing Kurds into the "circle of the civilization" and strengthening their "Ottomanness" via increasing state infrastructure in the region became the main objectives of the CUP government during the Constitutional Period. Before focusing on the centralization attempts of the CUP in the region, it will be better to give a brief account on colonialism in "the Ottoman context." Selim Deringil argues that from the end of the nineteenth century "Ottomans adopted a colonial stance towards the people of the periphery of their empire" which he defined as "borrowed colonialism."[281] According to Deringil "although one side of this "barrowed colonialism" was based on practices of an Islamic empire as Caliphate and Sharia, the other side was based on the vision of "positivist, enlightenment inspired centralizing reforms".[282] But this colonial attitude was not the same with the British or the French ones. "For the Ottomans, colonialism was a survival tactic, and in this sense the Ottoman Empire could hardly be compared to the aggressive industrial empires of the West."[283] Ottoman central authority during the late nineteenth century reforms, with the "mentality of civilization" attempted to penetrate and "modernize" its "backward" peripheries by recruiting the local population into the regular army, building modern state infrastructures, bringing the "*fruits of civilization"* to the mentioned provinces, and etc. as illustrated by Deringil

[281] Selim Deringil, ""They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery" ; the Late Ottoman Empire and Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* V. 45, no. 2 (Apr. 2003): , p. 313.

[282] Ibid.: , p. 316.

[283] Ibid.: , p. 313.

in the case of Libya.[284] The studies on "Ottoman colonialism" mostly focus on the Arab provinces of the empire where state power was weak compared to the other parts of the empire. For instance Makdisi, by focusing on the Arab provinces of the empire, argues that Ottoman Empire "created a notion of pre-modern within the empire in a manner akin to the way European colonial administration represented their colonial subjects".[285] Thomas Kuhn also, by focusing on the province of Yemen, shows how imperial government developed a colonial attitude towards the Yemeni population by making a distinction between the "civilized" Ottoman center and "savage" tribes of Yemen.[286]

Although such a "colonial project" began with the Tanzimat era in the Kurdsih provinces, it gained strenght in terms of "practice" and "discourse" during the reign of the CUP. Ottoman Empire's attempts to "modernize" and "centralize" Kurdish region, in the late nineteent and early twentieth centureis was also a process in which Kurds were represented as 'backward,' 'incivil,' 'savage' and 'indolent' in the texts and reports produced by the Ottoman bureaucracy and intelligentsia. Such sterotypes and representations fits very much to Edward Said's definition of orientalism. According to Said, "orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the orient' and most of the time 'the occident'".[287] Said shows how from the late eighteenth century, the text produced by the western world represented and constructed 'the orient' as backward,

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[284] Ibid.: , p. 329-30.

[285] Usamma Makdisi, "Ottoman Orietalism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (Jun, 2002): , p. 769.

[286] Thomas Kühn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1919," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007).

[287] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Newyork: Vintage Books, 1979) p. 2.

incivil, barbaric, stagnant on the other hand the west represented as 'modern,' 'civilized,' 'orgnaized' and etc.

In the Ottoman version of orientalism, Makdisi argues that it was "a complex of Ottoman attitudes produced by a nineteenth-century age of Ottoman reform that implicitly and explicitly acknowledged the West to be the home of progress and the East, writ large, to be a present threat of backwardness." [288]According to him tthe Ottomans regarded their own Arab periphery "as backward and as not yet[289] Ottoman." Thus, the attempts of Ottoman reformers to modernize amd to Ottomanize their 'backward' Arab peripheries led the emergence of Ottoman Orientalism. Most of the texts that were produced by the Ottomans from the nineteen century represented the Arabs, Yemenis and Kurds as "savage" as opposed to "modern" and "civil" central state. However such an authoritarian discourse was not only produced against Muslim subjects of the empire. As Vangelis Kechriotis argues it also targetted non-muslims like Greeks, Armenians, Balkanic populations especially in the years of the CUP reign. [290]

After the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period, newly appointed governors of the Kurdistan prepared several reports or articles in order to take the attention of the state to the affairs of the Kurdish region. Such reports not only show how Ottoman Empire governed the region in a 'colonial' way, but also illustrate how Ottoman bureocracy created its own 'Kurdish orient.' In such texts Kurds were represented as culturally 'inferior' and 'backward' comparing to the 'civilized' and 'modern' central state. *Mutasarrıf* Ahmed Macid, shortly after his appointment to

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[288] Makdisi, "Ottoman Orietalism,", p. 769.

[289] Ibid.: , p. 770.

[290] Vangelis Kechriotis, "Post-Colonial Criticism and Muslim-Christian Relations in the (Very) Late Ottoman Empire: The Case of Izmir /Smyrna."

Muş, wrote an article in order to draw the attention of the government into the affairs of the Kurdistan. In his article "The Circumstances of Kurdistan and the Issue of Reform" (*Kürdistan Ahvâli ve Mesele-i Islâhat)* which was published in *Mülkiye,* he argued that;

> The principal dwellers of Muş district, the Kurdish people, is an ancient nation who have been living in a state of tribalism and nomadism since centuries. Although the inability of the Kurds for civilization cannot be claimed and proved, as this region is far away from the central state and as they do not have the necessary tools to educate their people, to improve the land and the public works, and as it was let alone in its remote and natural situation, they have kept their specificity and incivility. The rural people who are the principal dwellers have been in an absolute ignorance, nearly a kind of savagery, and as they have not known anything about the laws and the properties which distinguished human beings, they have been poorly under the domination of the people who have gained the notoriety and power of being Beg or Agha forcefully or by heritage. (…) Moreover Kurds are naturally indolent and do not work and do not want to work. Thus during their childhood and youth they lack of the education of thougt and morality and live in indolence and lethargy... [291]

Beginning from the eighteenth century "Western representations of the indolent orient were a crucial aspect of the Enlightenment thought."[292] 'Indolence' was also an aspect of the Ottoman representation of its own Kurdish orient. The Kurds of Muş were regarded as 'naturally indolent' and 'morally improper' by the newly appointed CUP governor. An essential distinction were made between 'savage' Kurds and 'modern' imperial government. Moreover the comments of the local governor resembles to the ones of a British governor of colonial India of the nineteenth century. However, Macid's 'orient' also differed from the 'western orient' in many points. According to Macid, the reasons that kept the Kurds as 'incivil,' 'savage' and 'ignorant' was the lack of state infrastructure in the region. Thus in order to

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[291] Macid, "Kürdistan Ahvali Ve Mesele-I Islahat.", See Appendix K (Document 4) for the modern Turkish trascription of the text.

[292] Makdisi, "Ottoman Orietalism,", p. 768.

eradicate the 'savagery' among the Kurds, *fruits of civilization* should be brought to the region by the central power. Macid's words, "the inability of the Kurds for the civilization cannot be claimed and proved" ("Kürdlerin medeniyete kâbiliyetsizlikleri idia ve isbat olunamaz ise de") best represents this logic. According him, in order to complete the "civlization process of the Kurds" (*terbiye-i medeniyenin istikmâli*) or to facilitate the progress and prosperity (*Terakkî ve umrânın têmin ve teshili*) in Kurdistan, imperial government should provide security, better educational facilities and encourage the local population to do economical activities. If all of these conditions provided Kurds would met with the 'civilization';

> [Thus] people will continue their education in schools, travel on highroads, see, learn, work, gain, own his/her business [*kesb*], tell good from evil, apreciate the profit and cost, [and] morally progress. Boldness, courage, activity and solidity will rise, learn about honor, self-respect, reputation, [and] patriotism [*Vatanperverlik*]. Horizons will be widened and ideas will change. The idea and feeling of citizenship will replace old customs which are derived from religious conflicts and based on centruies of ignorance…[293]

Such an oriental discourse also legitimazed Ottoman rule in Kurdistan. The Kurds who were considered as "culturally inferior" also were regarded as "alien to the modern government institutions." Thus, they should be not only "civilized" but also be taught how to be a right "Ottoman." During the Second Constitutional era, such a "civilizing mission" was lead by the CUP bureaucracy. As it is going to be discussed in this chapter most of the imperial and local government reports had described Kurdish tribes as "ignorant," "uncivilized" and "savage" which also allegedly led them to be deceived by the imperial Russia and "traitors" like Bedirxan Pashazades.

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[293] Ahmed Macid, "Kürdistan Ahvâli ve Mesele-i Islâhat," *Mülkiye*, no. 10 (1 Teşrin-i Sani 1325), p. 12-13 See Appendix K (Document 5) for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

Makdisi argues that "Arab elites were themselves involved in a similar dynamic with their own peripheries (whether constituted along ethnic, gender, or class lines)…" in which resulted in multiple orientalist discourses."[294] It was also the same among Kurdish elites and intellectuals. Like the CUP, Kurdish intellectuals had also "civilizing projects" for their own community, but what they understood from Ottomanism is clearly different from what CUP had understood from it. With the aim of uplifting the Kurds to the degree of civilization several articles were published in the newspapers like *Kurdistan* (1898-1902), *Kürd Teâvün ve Terakkî Gazetesi* (1908-1910) and *Roj-i Kurd* (1913). The "backwardness" among the Kurdish tribes was an outstanding issue stressed in the Kurdish press of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[295] Most of the Kurdish intellectuals who took their education in western oriented Tanzimat Schools and were employeed in the Ottoman bureaucracy mostly settled in Istanbul seem to have replicated the discourse of the Ottoman reformer bureaucrats. A striking example would be Mikdat Bedirxan. He was the publisher of the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan* as mentioned in the third chapter and acted with the Young Turks while he was in Egypt in order to dehrone Abdulhamid II. As will be discussed later he became an anti CUP figure during the Second Constitutional era. He was appointed as the Mutasarrıf of Dersim in late 1912 when the Liberal Entente favored a government change. During his mission in Dersim, in a report which he prepared about the Kurds of Dersim, he argued that;

> (…) The inhabitants [of Dersim] who belong to Alewi Kurdish race have not benefited from the fruits of civilization, education and social discipline (terbiye-i ictimâiye). They live in a state of savagery and ignorance and remained at the beginnings of the

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[294] Makdisi, "Ottoman Orietalism,", p. 795.

[295] See for instance; Mesud, "Dersaadet'de (Hetaw-i Kurd) Ceirde-i Gurrası Müdiriyet-i Aliyesine," *Hetaw-i Kurd*, no.1 (11 Teşrin-i Evvel 1329)

> creation [of mankind]. (…)
>
> The Punishment (têdibat) and reformatory measures (tedâbir-i ıslâhiye) that English had applied in Sudan are worth of considering and have an exemplary importance for us. (…)
>
> They [People in Dersim] do not know what it means civilization, life and even humanity. According to safe rumors, people settle in interior parts of [Dersim] resemble the savage people of Africa. They live completely naked and live on plant roots and fruits. It has been said that, although some of them resemble human being in appearance, spirutually they are like animals. (…) [296]

Although other texts of the Kurdish intellectuals and political activists did not bear the Midhats' 'authoritarian discourse', they were also obssesed with the idea of civilization and claims on modernization. This was not peculiar to the Kurdish intellectuals/elites. Kechriotis argues that in the Post revolutionary (1908) Izmir, the Christians elites like Muslim ones had "build upon a tradition of authoritarian discourses and practices" and "notions such as progress, order and proper behavior become the values not of a 'middle class', but of a 'Turkish middle class' or a 'Greek middle class' with different claims to Ottomanness…"[297]

Such a brief discussion on Ottoman colonialism is presented with the reason of showing that the "civilizing mission" of the CUP administration along with its "colonial mentality" gave no political space for the Kurdish intellectuals in their own homeland**.** The aim of the CUP government was to establish a direct rule in Kurdistan without any consultation and negotiation with the Kurdish circles no matter how much they were in favor of Constitutional rule. This was an important issue which broke the ties between the CUP and Kurdish notables like Bedirxan

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[296]BOA, DH.İD. 3/81, (1331.1.20), See Appendix K (Document 6) for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

[297] Kechriotis, "Post-Colonial Criticism and Muslim-Christian Relations in the (Very) Late Ottoman Empire: The Case of Izmir /Smyrna."

Pashazades. On the other hand, as it will be shown in following sections, Kurdish intellectuals and political activists also had their own projects for their own community. Although the CUP aimed to establish a central "nation state" based on Ottoman identity (as will be discussed, after 1913, this was gradually replaced by Turkish identity), Kurdish intellectuals were in favor of a decentralist empire in which they could enjoy their Kurdish identity and work for the progress of their nation (This was latter to be replaced by a secessionist form of Kurdish nationalism)

Reactions to the Constitutional Government

The Kurds did not have a common ground towards the new constitutional government. Although Istanbul settled Kurdish intellectuals, notables and political activists welcomed the Constitutional rule and established close relationships with the CUP, Kurdish tribes who had previously joined the Hamidian Regiments, religious groups who felt the constitution as a threat to religion, and local aghas whose authority was thought to going to be shaken reacted against the policies of the new government.[298] It seems that, the only circles in eastern provinces of the Empire which supported the new goverment were urban notables of the cities of Diyarbekir, Bitlis, Erzurum and Mosul. Aykut Kansu argues that a few years before the 1908 Revolution there was not only a growing dissatisfaction against Hamidian regime, but also a reaction to the new taxations - *Şahsi Vergi* and *Hayvanat-i Ehliye Rüsumu* (poll tax on domestic animals) – imposed by the state.[299] Kansu also argues that such

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[298] BOA, DH.MKT, 2826/59, (1327-Ca-9), BOA, DH.MUİ, 54-1/20, (1328-M-1) For more detailed reports see; BOA, DH.SYS.23/1 (1330.2.8)

[299] Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden, New york Brill, 1997), p. 30-31.

a discontent and civil disobediance was organized by the Unionists in the form of tax revolts, demonstrations, protests and occupation of the telegraph offices in Erzurum, Mosul, Bitlis and other eastern cities of the Empire.[300] The protesters, generally composed of merchants, shopkeepers and artisans, demanded the cancelation of new taxes, the dismissal of the corrupted governors.[301] Even in Diyarbekir and Erzurum they demanded the removal of the Hamidian Regiments. What is noteworthy in here is that the Unionists had a considerable amount of supporters among the urban notables of the Kurdish cities during the late Hamidian era. Such circles continued to support the CUP during the Second Constitutional Period and also supported the centralization and modernization policies of the government in the rural areas. However the rural local authorities, because of the mentioned policies of the new government, were strictly against the CUP and the newly established Constitution. Although it cannot be claimed that there existed a clearcut distinction between urban and rural people and authorities, the overall tencency was as such. The conflicts between the city centers and peripheries produced new social and political alliances in the region within which Bedirxan Pashazades were also engaged. Keeping the heterogenity of the region in mind it is necessary to overview the policies of the new government in eastern provinces of the Empire and the reactions very briefly.

As Janet Klein argues, the first attempt of the Constitutional Rule related to the eastern provinces of the Empire was to reorganize the Hamidian Regiments. Zeki Pasha, the Commander of the Fourth Army, who was one of the prime movers of the

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[300] Ibid.

[301] Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi Elusive Transformation: The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*, trans. Ayda Erbal (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995), pp. 35-97.

Hamidian Regiments, was dismissed in August 1908.[302] The name of the regiments 'Hamidiye' which connotated the old regime was also turned into 'Tribal Light Cavalry Regiments' *(Hafif Süvari Alayları)*.[303] The new goverment also reduced the number of the regiments of Milli (in Diyarbekir) and Ertoşi (in Mosul).[304] It seems that, instead of abolishment or conscripting them into the army, the CUP government chose to modernize and also centralize the existing Regiments under the name of the Tribal Light Cavalry. This decision was taken also because of lack of a powerful central authority in the region. Although politically the CUP government was more obsessed with centralization, it still had to engage in mediation with local groups because of the limits of central authority. Like the CUP government, most of the Kurdish intellectuals who were members of the KTTC, were also in favor of a reform program concerning the regiments.[305] The Armenians who suffered most from the Hamidian Regiments did not have any common agenda concerning the abolishment of them. Dikran Mesron Kaligian argues that, during the reform debates of 1913-14, although the Western Bureau of the ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) was in favor of the abolishment of the regiments, the Armenian Bureau was against this. "The believed it would be better if they remained intact so that the Kurds could get the official military training and thus be better disciplined."[306] The weaking of the "Hamidian tribes" had resulted in a power vacuum which gave the Bedirxanis

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[302] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p. 97.

[303] Ibid, p. 109.

[304] Ibid

[305] İç Haberler, Miran Lideri Abdulkerim, *Kürd Teâvün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, No:3, 6 Kânunievvel 1324, in Bozarslan, p. 139.

[306] Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers 2009), p. 203.

relative fredoom in the region.

Not suprisingly, early reactions to the Constitutional rule came from the Hamidian Regiments. Since İbrahim Pasha of Milli, one of the most powerful Hamidian tribes out of state control, the first attempt of the CUP was to have power on him. During the reign of the Abdulhamid II, his tribe became one of the most powerful tribes of the region by establishing his own domination over Arab and Kurdish tribes and also peasantry. The tribe of Milli also had engaged in conflicts with the urban notables of Diyarbekir. Stephen Duguid argues that the constant conflict among urban notables of Diyarbekir and Tribe of Milli was because of the control of the trade routes and agricultural land of the Vilâyet. Fuat Dündar argues that the notables of Diyarbekir had occupied the telegraph office of the city twice in which they tried to reach their complaints to the palace.[307]Pirinçizade Fevzi and Müftü Hamdi (Head of the Diyarbekir Branch of KKTC) as two influential members of CUP organized the protests against the Milli.[308] Ziya Gökalp, as a close relative of the Diyarbekir mayor, also attended these occupations and later wrote "*Şaki İbrahim Destanı*" in which heintroduced the struggle of the civilized urban population against an uncivilized Kurdish tribe.[309] As mentioned before, "self-orientalism" also existed among the Kurdish intellectuals. Ziya Gökalp who is generally regarded as the father of Turkism, is the best example of this tendency. As Dündar argues he regarded the Kurds as a band of tribal organization, who did not know anything about civilization. After the declaration of the Second Constitution, a few clashes occured between the

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[307]Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi, İttihat Ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), p. 81.

[308] Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün Ve Terakki Cemiyeti Ve Gazetesi*, p. 14.

[309] Ziya Gökalp, *Şaki İbrahim Destanı Ve Bir Kitapta Toplanmış Şiirler*, ed. Şevket Beysanoğlu (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi - Kültür Bakanlığı, 1976). See after Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi, İttihat Ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, p. 82.

government troops and İbrahim Pasha of Milli. While these clashes continued he lost his life because of a disease. Later, his tribe was defeated by the Ottoman army by taking the support of the urban notables.[310]

Another case would be the account of Barzan Tribe, which because of the lack of central authority had enhanced its power. Like Milli, the growing power of the Barzan had led conflicts with surrounding tribes, sheiks and sects. In the south it had conflicts with Zibar and in the north with the Nehris.[311] The growing power of the Barzan was broken by the central state when the CUP came to the power. During the military campaign against Barzan, the CUP got the support of the surrounding tribes like Nehri and Zibar.[312] Like during the Abdülhamid II, the inter-tribal conflicts were used by the central state in order to increase its central authority in the peripheries. Although the power of the Barzan was broken down in the early years of the Second Constititional Era, the conflict between the central state and Barzan Tribe had continued through the World War I[313] and like many disaffected circles Sheikh Abdusselam, the leader of the Barzan Tribe, established contacts with Bedirxanis.[314]

Finally Agha Sorzade Abdurrahman [Red Agha], the leader of the Shırnaklı, who during the reign of the Abdulhamid II had consolidated his power in the districts of the Shırnak and Siird, was strictly against the existence of the Bedirxanis in Bohtan (See Chapter 3). But after the deposition of the Sultan, he redefined his

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[310] Ibid.

[311] Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 405. See also; Ali Said, "Kürdistan, Ceryan Eden Vakai; Barzan Eşkiyası Mı, Bazyan Eşkiyası mı? Tanin, no. 387 (16 Eylül 325), pp. 1-2

[312] İbid., p.1

[313] Wadie Jwaideh, *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi, Kökenleri Ve Gelişimi*, II ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1961), pp. 217-18.

[314] Kemal Mazhar Ahmed, *1. Dünya Savaşı'nda Kürdistan* (Istanbul: DOZ, 1996), p. 105.

political loyalty and became opposed the new policies of the new government. In December 1909, he sent a telegram to Istanbul complaining about some officials and local families in seizing his villages in Cizre. However, the *kaimakam* of Cizre stated that Abdurrahman Ağa had usurped several villages from the mentioned families during the Hamidian era and now with the restoration of the Constitution, real owners got their lands back.[315] In 1911 he also engaged in conflicts with local forces and debt enforcement officers in Cizre. Officials reported that his resistance was shaped because of his contacts with Bedirxanis.[316] Since centralist aspects of the new government threatened his power and authority in the region, like many disaffected circles he contacted with Bedirxanis in the politics of the region.

The Government also engaged in a series of "reforms" in the Dersim region. In an article, in *Tanin,* in 1909, it was stated that all the tribes of Dersim accepted the authority of the government and also wished to obey any the govermental duties.[317]

Such a tension between the Kurds and central state had produced new social and political relationships in the Kurdish region. Since most of the local tribes were disaffected from the central goverment, they engaged in searching new alliances against the state. As it is going to be ilustrated by giving more examples, Bedirxani family, who newly returned from the exile, benefited from such a political atmosphere by establishing a political language against the existing goverment.

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[315] BOA, DH.MUİ 41-2/17, (1328.Ra.2)

[316] BOA, DH.SYS 24/2-1, (1329.5.5)

[317] Taho, "Kürdistan, Haydaranlı Aşireti Nasıl Tedib Edildi?" *Tanin*, 1 Teşrin-i evvel Efrenci 1909. See also: Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 404.

First Arrivals and Contacts with the Kurdish Tribes

It has been already mentioned in the third chapter that Bedirxanis had attempted to return to Kurdistan during the reign of the Abdülhamid II. Because of the harshness of the political authority they had never fully accomplished their aim. Besides, Hamidian tribes did not want such a powerful dynasty in their own domain. When the II Constitutional rule was restored in 1908, they went to Kurdistan since there was not any political prohibition. Contrary to the Hamidian regime, the CUP government did not prevent any of the family members from returning to Kurdistan but, the CUP involved in other strategies in order to weaken the influence of the family members among the Kurds.

Although the activities and demands of the Bedirxanis in the region were multidimensional and differed from one individual to another, all of them took side with the Constitutional regime through the first years of the 1908 Revolution. Regarding the new regime as an age of freedom and opportunity, most of them aimed to settle in Kurdistan and work for the material and educational progress of the Kurds as they expressed in their articles published in *Kurdistan* in 1909. The firstcomers were Miktad and Bedri brothers. They travelled in central Bohtan, Cizre, Eruh, Pervari and Garzan, collecting signatures from the local population not only to get the properties, lands and waqfs of the Bedirxan Beg back, but also to finance educational facilities of the Bohtan through their revenues.[318] They were mostly in contact with the Batuans and Shırnaklı, two powerful tribes of Bohtan which have

[318] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-1, (1329.5.5) and BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-2, (1329.11.12)

already been mentioned in the third chapter. [319] Contacts of the Bedri and Midhat with Kurdish tribes immediately took the attention of local governors. In March 1911 Governor of Erzurum warned that the influences of the Bedirxanis are limited in the vilâyet of Erzurum, but in Siird district if they began to propagandize their influence will reach to the Cezire ibn-i Omer and Zaho.[320]

Although local officers were suspicious about their activities, Midhat and Bedri brothers had great expectations from the constitutional rule. They were travelling among the Kurdish tribes, distributing pamphlets, organizing meetings and emphasizing the benefits of constitution, education, progress and civilization to the local Kurds. With the aim of encouraging Kurds for education, they engaged in establishing a Kurdish school in Siird and to restore an old *Medrese* in Eruh. They had approached several local notables in order to take financial support to their activities.[321] Even it was stated that they aimed to open a University (Darü'l-fünun) in Bohtan.[322] "Maarif" (Education) was one of the most repeated terms of the period in the texts and speeches of the Bedirhan Pashazades, along with *Temeddün* (civilization), *Ittifâk* (Union) and *Terakkî* (Progress). The *Kaimakam* of Pervari reported that Bedirxan Pashazades had arranged a meeting in 10th of July 1911, in order to celebrate the third anniversary of constitutional rule. During the meeting Midhat Bedirxan gave a speech in Kurdish and talked about the benefits of the constitution (Meşrutiyet) and freedom (Hürriyet), and also about the importance of the loyalty to Ottoman state. Kurds engaged in celebration by making fires and

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[319] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-1, (1329.5.5)

[320] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-1, (1329.5.5)

[321] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-1, (1329.5.5)

[322] Fatih Ünal, "2. Meşrutiyet, Ulusçuluk Ve Kürt Ayrılıkçı Hareketi," *Doğu - Batı, 2. Meşrutiyet "100. Yıl"* 2, no. 46 (2008): , p. 92.

shooting guns.[323]

By looking at their pro-constitutional attitude it cannot be argued that they were also content with the CUP. Family members gradually approached to the liberal circles of the empire while they were engaging in clashes with the CUP circles. Midhat Bedirxan (Publisher of the *Kurdistan* in 1898) was among the first group who was disillusioned with the CUP and established contacts with to liberal circles of the Empire. In an article published in *Şehrah* (The True Path), it was stated that Mikdat had connections with Serif Pasha who was the head of *Islâhat-ı Esasiye Fırkası* (Radical Ottoman Party) founded in late 1909, in Paris. This organization was among the first political organizations which opposed to the CUP administration from abroad.[324] Moreover it was also noted that Bedri and Midhat had been distributing a pamphlet among the "simple Kurds" of region called as "*Uyanınız! Uyanınız"* (Wake up! Wake Up) [325] written by Abdullah Cevdet in 1907. He was also one of the members of the *Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası* (Ottoman Democratic Party), an anti-CUP organization founded as early as 1909.[326] The pamphlet was mentioning about the cruelties of the Hamidian regime, saluting the Anatolian revolts in Erzurum, Trabzon and Kastamonu in the pre-constitutional era, stressing the importance of rule of law and citizenship and criticizing the idea of "subjecthood of sultans."

Attempts of Bedri and Midhat in establishing waqfs, schools and madrasas remained futile, not only because of the pressure of the local officials but also

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[323] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-2, (1329.11.12) "*On Temmuz îyd-i milletde ikamet etmekde oldukları Kepir nam mevkide bi'lumûm Ekrad'a meşrutiyet ve hürriyetin fevaidinden ve hükümete sadakat ve itaatden bahis Kürdçe Midhat Bey tarafından nutuklar irad, ateş yakmak ve silah atmak gibi ilan-ı merasim ve şadumani eylemişdir."*

[324] Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 219-24.

[325] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-2, (1329.11.12)

[326] Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, pp. 172-73.

because of the articles written against them in Ottoman newspapers. For instance, articles published in *Şehrah* and *Rumeli* newspapers regarded the activities of the Bedirxan Pashazades as "encouraging 'simple' and 'innocent' Kurds against the Ottoman dynasty and Turks."[327] Due to the pressure on them, Bedri and Midhat left Bohtan in August 1911.

However, in July 1911, Hasan and Hüseyin and their nephew Süleyman Bedirxan were also in the region. Hasan Bedirxan was born in Kandiye in 1858 (1275 Hijri) when Bedirxan Beg appointed to Crete as mir-miran. Although he had not graduated, he received his education in the School of Civil Service (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye)* and the School of Law (*Mekteb-i Hukuk)*. Then he worked as an official in several places of the Ottoman Empire including Jeruselam.[328] As mentioned in the third chapter Hüseyin Kenan Pasha was engaged in Revolt of 1878 with his brother Osman Pasha. After the supression of the revolt he was brought to Istanbul. Hereupon he worked as *mutasarrıf* and *kaimakam* in different parts of the empire including Antalya and Yozgat[329] until he was exiled with his family members in Tripoli (in1906).

During a conversion with the governor of Erzurum Celal Bey, Hasan Bedirxan expressed their aim of travel among Kurdish tribes as "inviting Kurds to alliance and union and giving an end to the conflicts among Kurdish notables" a typical slogan of the Constitutional era voiced by the intellectuals of the Kurdish society. Like Midhat and Bedri, they were mostly active in Bohtan, where state infrastructure was lower than any other parts of Kurdistan. As said before; the

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[327] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-2, (1329.11.12)

[328] BOA, DH.SAİD (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records), 18/12 See also: Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 135.

[329] BOA, DH.SAİD (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records), 80/16

policies of the new government had produced new social and political relationships in the region. Since the new government took a more centralist policy towards the Kurdish region, there was a tension between the local aghas, sheyks, tribes with the central state. The broken power of the Hamidieh Regiments also led to a power vacuum.

Although, Bedirxanis in the late 1911 became politically more active, the political program that they had pursued was not concrete. It seems that what they had aimed first, by benefiting from the freedom of speech and political participation that was provided by the Constitution, was to establish new relationships among the Kurds and to work for the material, educational and social progress of the Kurds, to remove the inter-tribal conflicts and to empower their political influence without drawing the suspicions of the new government. Other than Shırnaklı and Batuan they were in relation with the tribes of Mahveran, Geliguyan, Zirkan and Gevran which were settled in the Cezire and Bohtan region.[330] These regions were also places where many Kurdish tribes became disaffected with the centralist policies of the CUP government. The *vali* of Mamüratü'l aziz stated that the activities of the Bedirxanis would have caused a bigger trouble than the conflicts led by Seyyid İdris in Asir [Yemen], if necessary precautions had been not taken immediately.[331] The *kaymakam* of Eruh also prepared a report in which he claimed that the state should increase its power in the region by establishing governmental institutions (teşkilat-ı mülkiye), building barracks and also incorporating the tribes into the new regime in

[330] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-3, (1330.1.30)

[331] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-2, (1329.11.12)

order to break the influence of the Bedirxanis on the local population.[332] During their early years in Bohtan most of the Bedirxanis including Bedri, Midhat, Hasan and Hüseyin were in favor of the Constitutional rule. They aimed to better the educational facilities of the region and give an end to the inter-tribal conflicts. These two points were also one of the most repeated issues in their journals both in the late Hamidian and Constitutional periods. While the elections of 1912 were approaching, the political program and the agenda of the Bedirxanis became more concrete and more organized.

The Elections of 1912

Despite its importance, the elections of 1912 and the attempts of the Kurds to enter into the political life of the empire have not been studied sufficiently. However, the elections are very significant not only to understand the changing political positions of the Bedirxan Pashazades in the empire, but also to investigate the political and social diffentations among the urban and rural settled Kurds. In this part, I will try to discuss those points together.

Like in the Arab and Albanian provinces of the empire, the Kurdish region witnessed a competition between the politicians of the CUP and the notables of the region. But it also should be noticed that some of the prominent Kurdish notables had also been candidates or represantatives of the CUP during the Second Constitutional Period. For instance Babanzade İsmail Hakkı who was also a writer for *Tanin* (a daily newspaper of the CUP) was selected from Baghdad during the elections of 1908 and Pirinççizade Feyzi who was also one of the members of the

[332] BOA, DH.SYS 24/2-3, (1330.1.30)

CUP was selected from Diyarbekir during the elections of 1912.[333]

Contrary to the elections of 1908, those held in 1912 witnessed a strict struggle between the CUP and the oppositional groups. The *Liberal Entente* [Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası] shortly after its establishment, became a party in which most of the oppositional groups met. Kurdish notables and intellectuals also played an important role in the foundation and activities of the party. Sherif Pasha and Lütfi Fikri were two important Kurdish members of the party, the former was strictly against the CUP, criticizing it because of the chauvinistic policies towards other ethnicities in the Empire.[334] Lütfü Fikri, who was elected as representative of Liberal Party from Dersim in 1908, not only became again candidate of HIF from Dersim in 1912 but also engaged in publishing several newspapers as *İfham*, *İkdam*, *Tanzimat* in which he criticized the CUP administration. Like many Kurdish intellectuals the Bedirxanis also joined the HIF, since they were also gaining a critical position towards the policies of the CUP.

In late 1911 Hasan, Hüseyin and Süleyman Bedirxan applied as candidates of Siird for the elections of 1912 and engaged in an election campaign among Kurdish tribes, aghas and notables.[335] Not much later Hasan, Hüseyin and Süleyman Bedirxan made an announcement in *Ikdam* (Perseverence), a daily newspaper close to the HIF, and not only congratulated the party in the name of 30.000 Kurds but also demanded enough copies of the party program for the branches which were going to be

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[333] Fevzi Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2007).

[334] Taner Timur, "Bir İttihatçı Düşmanı Şerif Paşa Ve Meşrutiyet Gazetesi," *Tarih ve Toplum* 12, no. 72 (1989): , p.338.

[335] BOA, DH.SYS 24/2-3, (1330.1.30)

established in the Kurdish region.[336] It is not clear when Hüseyin Bedirxan met with the liberal circles, however after his return from exile it seems that he had contacts with the liberal circles like Mevlanzade Rıfat.[337] (who was a writter in the *Hukuk-i Umumiye,* a newspaper having published anti CUP articles during the elections of 1908.)[338]

Not only the ones in Kurdish region, but also some of the Bedirxanis in Istanbul also joined the HIF. Emin Ali Bedirxan, another member of the family, who at those times was living in Istanbul and who was going to play an important role in post WWI Kurdish movement, also joined the HIF.[339] The reasons which led Bedirxanis to join the HIF were various. Contrary to the CUP, HIF had a more liberal party program. Two articles of the party program are worth of mentioning since they were also related to the future of the Kurds. Tarık Zafer Tunaya argues that, contrary to the increasing Turkist policies of the CUP, the HIF was supporting Ottomanism, believing in the fact that Turkism would lead to the disintegration of the empire.[340] It also "stressed the importance of propositional representation for ethnic and religious minorities."[341] Second, the HIF, contrary to the CUP, was in favor of the decentralism *(adem-i merkeziyetçilik).* As Ali Birinci argues, decentralism should not be interpreted as a kind of autonomy to the different identities of the Empire.

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[336] İkdam, 25 Kânunisani 1329, *Selâmet-i vatanı bir kat daha têmin eylemek emel-i yeganesiyle teşkili muceb-i saadet ve millet olan Hürriyet ve itiliaf fırka-i mübeccelesini an samim-ül kalb şimdilik 30 bin kişi namına tebrike şitab eyleriz. Kürdistan'da müteaddid şube teşkili içun miktar-ı kâfi programın süratı tesyarı müsterhimdir.*

[337] Mezlanzade Rıfat, *Sürgün Hatıralarım*, ed. Mithat Kutlar (İstanbul: Avesta, 2009), p. 22.

[338] Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri*, p. 131.

[339] Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of Newyork Press, 2004), p. 99

[340] Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 299.

[341] Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914* , p. 126.

Decentralism meant more administrative freedom to the provincials. Both decentralist and Ottomanist aspects of the HIF attracted the Kurdish notables who had already became disaffected with the CUP's "Turkist" and centralist policies. Tunaya argues that the different ethnic identities had seen Ottomanism as a way to protect their national identity and that is why HIF had attracted the different ethnic identities of the Empire.[342]

The HIF also attempted to get the support of the Kurds by flattering feelings of them. In *Têminat* [Warrantee] a newspaper close to the HIF, an article published with the pen name "Bir Kürd." In the article it is stated that; "The Kurds now wish for a representative who never forgets that he is a Kurd and works for the benefit of Kurdistan. (…) The idea of a nation is not a shame. The Kurds want that they can also fully understand their nationhood. In this context, Kurdish representatives have great importance."[343]

Kurdish "intellectuals" were not the only ones who had became disaffected with the CUP's centralist policies. Since, most of the local populations including Kurdish tribal leaders, aghas and sheiks were also disaffected by the CUP's policies, Bedirxanis managed to draw local support during the elections of 1912, by establishing a political discourse against the CUP. Siird as a district was the most suitable region for the Bedirxanis to declare their candidacy, since the region became discontented with the centralist policies of the CUP. Such a support to the family members alarmed the CUP for many reasons. First, such a powerful candidate could break the power of the CUP candidate in the region, second the support of the local

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[342]Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, p. 299.

[343] Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri*, p. 236. *"Kürdler şimdi öyle bir mebûs istiyorlar ki asla Kürd olduğunu unutmasın, Kürdistan için çalışsın… Kavim fikri ayıp değildir. Kürdlerde istiyorlar ki onlarda kavimliklerini tamamıyla anlasınlar. Bu babda Kürd mebûslarının büyük ehemmiyeti vardır."*

population to the family members could easily turn into a nationalist character.[344]

Not much later, the application of the Bedirxanis as candidates for the elections of 1912 was rejected by the provincial governments. The *kaimakam* of Cizre stated that since the Bedirxanis did not have registration in the local region, their application could not be approved.[345] In response to the decision of the government, Bedirxanis sent numerous telegraphs to the provincial governments and central state in order to protest the situation.[346]

In the elections of 1912, the CUP did not declare its own candidate immediately in Siird. Local governors who were close to the CUP were willing to declare Abdurrezzak Efendi, the old representative of Siird, again as a candidate. M. Şükrü Hanioğlu argues that, "In Siird, people united under the leadership of the local mayor, Abdurrezzak Bey, against the alleged corruption of the local governor and officials"[347] before the 1908 Revolution. And if they [Abdurrezzak Beg] are the same individuals, it makes sense why he was selected as the CUP candidate in 1908, and why officials who were close to the CUP insisted his candidacy in 1912 Elections. From the telegraphs sent from the region it is understood that the CUP took most of its support from the urban settled Kurds, who had conflicts with the surrounding Kurdish tribes and rural aghas. Since the Bedirxanis had relations with the Kurdish tribes and aghas, the government also felt the existence of the Bedirxanis

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[344]BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-3, (1330.1.30) "*Mısır'da bila-tarih tab etdikleri beyân olunan ve sûreti 25 Nisan 327 tarihli ve 109 numerolu arizayla makam-ı ali kerimanelerine irsâl kılınan Emir Bedirhan nam risâlede tasvir edilen maksad-ı hakikilerine"*

[345] BOA, DH.SYS, 50/6-10, (1330.3.7)

[346] BOA, DH.SYS, 50/6-10, (1330.3.7) "*Saye-i meşrutiyetde vatanıma 'avdetle nüfusda kaydımı icra itmek istedimse de Mardin mutasarrıfı şifrelerle mümânaât etdi. Kaydımın hemen ifası lüzumunun mutasarrıflığa irâde buyurulması ile hürriyet-i şahsîyemize artık ta'aruz olunmamasını meşrutiyet perverliğinizden kemal-ı ehemmiyetle intizar eylerim. Fermân, Hasan Bedirhan"*

[347] Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution, the Young Turks 1902-1908*, p. 121.

as a threat to their own power. In March 1912, urban settled Kurds of Bitlis sent a telegraph to the central state in which they criticized the Bedirxanis;

> We have learned from the newspapers that Bedirxanis have applied to the Liberal Entente for the opening of the branches and for the distribution of the program of the party in the name of 30 thousand Kurds. We, Kurdish nation, have not heard about the Liberal Entente as well as we do not have any intention to be interested in that party and develop relations. (...) No one, no person, and no power can separate us from the heavenly Committee of Union and Progress. We certainly refute those news having been published and declare our kindness and sincerity to the CUP.[348]

The election of 1912 not only shows us the strength of the political parties but also shows social and political differentiation of the urban and rural areas. The senders of the above mentioned telegraph were mostly urban settled Kurds and were employed in the local government institutions. Other than the mayor of the city and several officials of the municipality there were also some notables (*mütteneffizan*). For instance Sheikh Abdülbaki, who had connections with the Unionists during the Hamidian era, actively supported the CUP in Bitlis after the declaration of the Second Constitution. He also helped the central state in the suppressing the anti-CUP local revolts in region.[349] What is important in here is that, in the time of crisis CUP had the ability to mobilize such urban settled populations.

In this context a comparison between the urban settled Arab and Kurdish notables will be helpful to clarify the issue. First, contrary to the Kurdish region, urban settled Arab intellectuals developed an oppositional attitude towards the CUP. Second, the "Turkification" and also the centralization attempts of the CUP in Arab

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[348] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-4, (1330.6.25), See Appendix G for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

[349] BOA, DH.KMS 27/32, (1332.L.18) Those who helped central state in suppressin the Molla Selim Revolt were also exempted from mobilization (seferberlik) during the WWI. DH.SYS. 123-04/4-06, For the communications between Şeyh Abdülbaki and Mustafa Kemal see: Süphandağ, *Büyük Osmanlı Entrikası Hamidiye Alayları*, pp. 497-98.

provinces took both the reaction of the secular intellectuals and local *ulemas*.[350] Third, cultural and political activities of the Arab intellectuals were not limited to Istanbul. Contrary to the Kurdish intellectuals, Arab intellectuals were also active in their own provinces. The numbers of the publications in the Arab provinces were much higher than the ones in the Kurdish region. Journalism not only fostered public opinion in the region, but also led to the emergence of Arabism.[351]

During the 1912 elections, in the Arab provinces of the Empire, the CUP tried to take the support of the countryside since it could not manage to take the support of the urban settled groups.[352] Yet in the Kurdish region the issue was more complicated. The CUP took most of its support from the urban notables who had tensions with the rural notables, tribal leaders and aghas. Since journalism in the Kurdish region was mostly controlled by the CUP, it neither led to the emergence of a powerful Kurdish nationalism in the region, nor established a political discourse against CUP. For instance *Peyman* (Swear) a weekly newspaper that was published in Diyarbekir, by a group of intellectuals close to the CUP (one of them was Ziya Gökalp), was strictly supporting the CUP policies in the region.[353] Another journal that was published in the region was *Çaldıran*. Like *Peyman* it was also established by the ones who were close to the CUP in Van and published several propagandist articles in order to break the influence of the "Kurdish nationalists" in the region.[354]

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[350] Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 71.

[351] Ibid., p. 60.

[352] Rashid Ismail Khalidi, "The 1912 Election Campaign in the Cities of Bilad Al-Sham," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* V. 16, no. 4 (Nov. 1984): , p. 462.

[353] Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi, İttihat Ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, p. 82.

[354] Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya*, p. 40.

Newspapers which were published in the printing houses of the Unionists like *Bingöl* also talked about Turkishness through a propagandist language.[355] Although Kurdish newspapers and journals published in Istanbul by Kurdish "intellectuals" were also circulating in the region, they were limited in number and it seems that they were not influential on the local population to form a powerful public opinion.

Another factor which influenced the results of the elections was the Tripoli War. Like in the Arab districts, the CUP propagandized for the Tripoli War heavily in the Kurdish populated areas.[356] For instance the announcement of the Bedirxanis in the *Ikdam* (Perseverance) was not welcomed by the urban settled notables who were close to the CUP because of the ongoing war. In a telegraph sent by the notables of the Bitlis, the Bedirxanis were criticized severely and notables expressed their loyalty to the CUP in mentioned hard times.[357] The local governor also expressed his pleasure with the reaction of the urban notables.

In most of the regions of the Empire, the CUP used its administrative power in order to win the elections. That is why the elections of 1912 were called as "the big stick elections."[358] Since the Kurdish region was also a battlefield between the CUP and oppositional groups, the CUP intervened into it by direct force or by other methods. In April 1912, when voting already came to an end, Kurdish notables who were close to the Bedirxanis sent a telegraph to the HIF centre, arguing that;

> In his report having been sent to the *mutasarrıf*, Siird municipal informs that the ex-Representative Abdurrezzak Efendi should be declared as the candidate of the Committee of Union and Progress in

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[355] "Türklük Etrafında," *Bingöl*, (27 Eylül 1328)

[356]For a similar case in Arab provinces of the empire see; Khalidi, "The 1912 Election Campaign in the Cities of Bilad Al-Sham."

[357] BOA, DH.SYS 24/2-4, (1330.6.25)

[358] Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri*, p. 266.

> the related offices. In Muş and Genç districts of the province the elections came to an end. Despite of the protests here, the elections have been delayed and now the reason of this is obvious. We, as the electors of four districts and centre have elected Hüseyin Bedirxan Pasha who is a servant for the benefit of the homeland. These rights have been provided by the holy constitution. The one who will be elected as the representative with the effort of Siird mayor will be the representative of the government officials and not that of the nation. The nation will no longer bear the law infringements of the government officials. If what is necessary will not be fulfilled to make the government officials obey to the laws, we will take upon any kind of sacrifice. [359]

From the telegraph above it is understood that the elections in Siird region were delayed and also the local governors used their administrative power in order to select their own candidate. Electors were stressing the political rights provided by the Constitution. In late April and early May protests took place against the *kaimakam* of Eruh. The protesters came from the surrounding villages and cheered for Hüseyin Pasha, who was the candidate having been nominated by the Bedirxani family. The local CUP governors described the situation as the provocation of the innocent folk by Hüseyin Pasha (*sade dilanı iğfal ile şikâyet sevk*). He was accused of having led people against the religion and government. [360] Yet the local government failed to capture Hüseyin Pasha since he had already left Eruh. The protesters were also disbanded.[361]

The voting finished in April 1912, and a new assembly convened in the same month by the declaration of the Sultan.[362] What was interesting is that neither Hüseyin Bedirxan nor Abdurrezzak Efendi was the winner of the elections. Nazım

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[359] BOA, DH.SYS, 83-2/2-13, (1330.5.20) See Appendix J for modern Turkish transcription of the text.

[360] BOA, BEO, 4034/302544, (1330.Ca.15)

[361] BOA, BEO, 4036/302642, (1330. Ca.15)

[362] İhsan Güneş, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi, Meşrutiyete Geçiş Süreci I. Ve Ii. Meşrutiyet*, vol. II (Ankara: TBMM Vakfi Yayınları, 1997).

Mağgönül, another man close to the CUP was nominated as representative of the Siird region[363], name of whom had never been come across among the documents about the candidates of the elections except in the declaration of the results. Like most of the regions of the empire, the Siird district was also in a state of turmoil because of the unfair results of the elections. The new assembly was adjourned in August 1912 both because of the objections and the change of the government in favor of the HIF.[364] New elections were considered to be held in August 1912.[365] Kurds who were supporting the Bedirxanis again sent a telegraph to Istanbul demanding the deposition of the *mutasarrıf* of Siird because of the unfair treatment against Bedirxani Hüseyin and because of his relations with the CUP during the elections. [366]

A similar telegraph was also sent by Bedirxani Hüseyin. Not much later the *mutasarrıf* of Siird, Reşid Efendi was replaced by Abdulhalik Mustafa Efendi.[367] The maltreatment of the government officers was not peculiar to the Kurdish region. Around the same years, Arab intellectuals of the empire were also criticizing the maltreatment of the government officers in their region. Shukri al Asali, a prominent Arab intellectual and also the deputy of Damascus argued that the government officers should be selected from local region, if not the ones who knew the local

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[363] Ibid.

[364] Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri*, p. 294.

[365] İbid.

[366] BOA, DH.SYS, 103-2/2-7, (1331.2.24), *Ittihâd [ve Terakkî Cemiyeti] tarafından mebûs intihâbı esnasında hidemât-ı zalimanesine mükâfâten Siird mutasarrıflığına ta'yîn edilub bu güne kadar muhâfaza-i mevki eden Reşid Efendi intihâb-ı cedidede dahi Ittihâd ve Terakki Cemiyetinin têmin-i muvaffâkiyeti içun Bedirhanzâde Hüseyin Paşa ve bendegânı hakkında avanesiyle (x) kıyâm ediyorlar. Tecavüzât vakalarına artık tahammülümüz kalmadığından size kadar 'adâlet mevcûd ise tekrar ale't tekrar mutasarrıfın 'azlini umûm sancak namına istirhâm eyleriz"*

[367] BOA, İ.DH, 1495/1330/L.52, (1330.L.23)

language and the governors should be fair minded, honorable and powerful.[368]

The new elections were cancelled because of the Balkan wars and until 1914 the empire was ruled without a parliament. Bedirxanis continued their political activities in the region but with greater suspicion and disbelief against the CUP government. Hüseyin Bedirxan, who had great expectations from the Constitution in the early years of the Revolution, now began to express his fears by asking "Is this the Constitutional regime? (Meşrutiyet bu mudur?)"[369]

The election of 1912 can also be a frame of reference to understand the Ottomanist and Kurdist inclinations among the Bedirxanis in particular and Kurdish rural people in general. The election of 1912 was a disappointment for Bedirxanis. The CUP's attitude towards family members during the elections worsened the relations between the family members and the state. During the same years, another important development influenced the Kurdish notables. Like in the Kurdish region, notables of Albania also became disaffected by the centralist aspects of the Ottoman government. The revolts of 1909 and 1910 were mostly derived from the new taxations imposed on Albania and centralization attempts of the government in the region. In the following years the revolts of the Albanians were mostly shaped by national demands. Albanian intellectuals were demanding the establishment of national schools in the region, the acceptance of decentralized administration, the free usage of the Albanian alphabet and language, the appointment of the local officers from the ones who were originally Albanian or the ones who knew Albanian language.[370] Although Albania was geographically far away from the Kurdish region,

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[368] Demir, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Ii. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Meclis-I Mebusan Seçimleri*, p. 294.

[369] Bedirhani Hüseyin, "Siird'de İntihabat Tehir Olunuyor," *Teminat*, 19 Şubat 1327

such demands had influenced and also encouraged the Kurdish intellectuals. While witnessing such national movements, Kurdish intellectuals turned their face more and more to their communities. After the elections, Hüseyin Bedirxan Pasha in September 1912, during a public speech in Siird, showed the Albanian uprisings as an example for the Kurds and argued that;

> People! We have heard about the movement and bravery of the Albanians who got angry to (x) have taken upon arms and attacked to the governments in various places for the protection of their nation. Are you less "patriotic" than Albanians? If you have blood, protect your people and repulse the officials in such a way. It is necessary to be quick. Why are you waiting?[371]

As seen the speech of Hüseyin Bedirxan contains nationalistic tone. Armed struggle was seen as a way to get rid of the Ottoman administration and also a way to preserve the "national identity." It can be said that the conflicts with the CUP administration and also the maltreatment of the government officials weakened the idea of Ottomanism among Kurdish intellectuals. Thereafter Kurdish intellectuals stressed more and more their Kurdish identity rather than their Ottoman identities. Such a shift had also reflections among the publications of the Istanbul settled Kurdish intellectuals. For instance, *Roj-i Kurd* which was published by Kurdish intellectuals of Istanbul during 1913, had a more Kurdist tone than the previous Kurdish publications.[372]

The developments in eastern provinces of the empire were also closely followed by the liberal circles. After the elections of 1912 Ebu el Kemal, a writer of

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[370] Stravro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakining 1878-1912* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[371] BOA, DH.SYS, 103-2/2-7, (1331.3.24), "*Ey ahâlî Arnavutların hareket ve cesâretlerini işitdiğimiz memleketlerinde ki (X) kızub silaha sarıldılar müteaddid mahallerde hükümetlere hücûm ve bu sûretle kavmiyetlerini muhâfaza itdiler. Siz Arnavudlardan hamiyetsiz misiniz?"*

[372] Gülseren Duman, "The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(S) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism" (MA, Boğaziçi University, 2010) p. 129

Tanzimat argued that "the eastern provinces of the Anatolia is the "Albania" of Rumelia" and the writer proposed the appointment of the experienced governors and mutasarrıfs, who also knew the region.[373]

In late 1912 Yusuf Kamil another member of the Bedirxani family also came to the Bohtan and supported their brothers' movement. Like most of the family members he was born in Istanbul in 1867, took his education in Mekteb-i Sultani (Imperial high School). As it was stated in his Sicill-i Ahvâl records he knew Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish and French and worked in several parts of the Empire as a mutasarrıf or kaimakam including Fatsa (1889), Bafra (1892), Akdağ (1896) and Aintab (1899). It has also been mentioned that because of his attempts in returning to Kurdistan he had been imprisoned for 4 months by palace in 1898. Before his exile to Rhodes in 1906, he had been working as a kaimakam in Haifa. No more information is available about his employment after his return from exile in 1908[374]

When Yusuf Kamil arrived in Bohtan, Bedirxan Pashazades had been in conflict with the notables of Mosul. In January 1913, a group of notables from Mosul sent a telegraph to the Ministry of Interior, warning the government that Bedirxanis were making propaganda among naive and savage Kurds *(sade dil vahşi ahâlî)* of the region for an independent Kurdish state.[375] Not only urban notables but also local governments attempted to pressure the central government in taking action against Bedirxan Pashazades by claiming that local troops was not enough for suppressing a

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[373] Ebu el Kemal, Vilayat-ı Şarkiye, *Tanzimat*, 25 Ramazan-ı Şerif 1330, pp. 1-2

[374] BOA, DH.SAİD, 76/101, See Appendix C for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

[375] BOA, DH. SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4) "*Çok defâdan beru Kürdistan'a göz dikmiş olan Bedirhanilerden Hüseyin Paşa ile kardaşı Kamil Bey'in teşebüsât-ı ihtilâl veyahud istiklalcu banelerinde Musul'un Kürd aşâirini teşrik, fikirlerini devlet 'aleyhinde tevhid, tahrik, garezle El Cezirede bir mevki'-i mühim ihrâz eden Sincar dağına kadar dahi geldikleri ve telkinât-ı muzırrada bulunub rüesâya halaklar iksa itmekle sade-dil vahşi ahâlînin efkârını tesmim eyledikleri ma'lûm olmuşdu...*" '

possible revolt. It is also reported that if the government did not take the necessary precautions immediately, Kurdish region would face a case like that of Albania. The contacts of the family members with the Yezidi tribes of Sincar made the situation more serious and also forced the governors to take precautions.[376] The Governor of the Diyarbekir, Celal Bey in order to increase the power of the state in the region and to break the influence of the Bedirxan Pashazades offered the increasement of the number of the zaptiehs and the number of the villages, establishing buildings which are physical appearance of the state influence and power, appointment of better qaimaqams and mudirs and also reforming the court.[377]

During the Hamidian era such "political actions" had immediately resulted in the culprits' exile from the region. However, now the governor aimed to break the influence of the Kurdish political activists on Kurds by increasing state infrastructure in the region. In order to strengthen the loyalty of the Kurdish tribes to the state, establishment of modern government institutions was proposed.

The Armenian Reform Debates, Bedirxan Pashazades and Kurdish Tribes

Armenian reform debates had always been the source of the conflicts between the Kurds and the Armenians from the second half of the nineteenth century. Most of the reform attempts of the central state (whether because of external pressure or not) in order to improve the conditions of the Armenians in the empire took the reaction of

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[376] BOA, DH. SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4). "*'avdetlerine müteakib ahâlîyi tesellih sevdasına düşmeleride fikirlerinde ki hıyâneti gösteriyor. Bunlar Yezidileri dâire-i ittihâda aldıkdan ve ahâlîyi tesellihe muvaffik oldukdan sonra Arnavudluğa bir nazîre yapmak isteyeceklerini her hal ve vaziyetlerile irae ediyor."*

[377] BOA, DH. SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4) "*hükümatın takviyesi kuvve-i zabtiyenin tezyidi, nevahinin teksiri, hükümet nüfuz ve kuvvetinin bir eser-i maddi ve hariciyesi olan hükümet konaklarının bir (x) bir sûretde inşâsı, iyi kaimakam ve müdirlerin intihâb ve ta'yîni ve adliyenin ıslâhıyla mümkün olur."*

the Kurdish tribes, sheiks and notables. The Kurdish - Armenian conflicts were not only shaped because of the land disputes or fear of the Armenian ascendancy but also because of the rising of "national awareness" in both communities. This point reveals itself in the precautions of the Ottoman state. In 1880, in Bulanıklar (a region in Bitlis), which was mostly settled by Kurds and Armenians, the Ottoman government proposed to forbid the use of words "Ermenistan" (Armenia) and "Kurdistan" claiming that these two words were increasing tensions among local population.[378]

The Berlin Treaty (1878) which was signed after the Ottoman – Russian War has always been regarded as a turning point in the relations between Kurds and Armenians. The treaty is important since it did not only bring the Armenian issue into the international arena but also introduced a reform package in order to better the conditions of the Armenian population. The 61th article of the treaty is "designed to guarantee the security of the Armenians in the region against the incursions and depredations of the Kurds and Circassians"[379]

Following the treaty most of the Kurdish aghas and begs were exiled by Abidin Pasha (who was appointed by the palace with the aim of the pursuing the reform program) since they were against the implementation of the reforms or seen as a threat to the security of the region (see chapter three). Not much later than the Berlin Treaty, a prominent Kurdish Sheikh at the Ottoman – Persian border revolted against Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Although the "nationalist" character of the revolt is an issue of debate in academia (see chapter two), the words of the Sheikh Ubeydullah, the leader of the Revolt, are worth mentioning in order to illuminate the tensions between Kurds and Armenians following the years of the Berlin Treaty;

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[378] BOA, İ.ŞD, 121/7231, (20.L.1298)

[379] Klein, *The Margins of Empire, Kurdish Militas in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, p.21.

> What is this I hear, that the Armenians are going to have an independent state in Van, and that the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves British subjects? I will never permit it, even if I have to arm the women.[380]

During the reign of Abdulhamid II, limited number of Kurdish intellectuals had stressed the importance of Kurdish - Armenian collaboration against Hamidian despotism. Such an idea was mostly voiced by the members of the Bedirxani family who were at those years had contacts with the Young Turks. They saw the conflicts between Kurds and Armenians as a result of Hamidian rule and expressed how Kurds and Armenians were living in peace before Abdulhamid II came to the throne. In most of his articles, Abdurrahman Bedirxan warned Kurdish tribes in their attacks on Armenians[381] and mentioned the importance of the alliance between these two communities by claiming that; "Thus, the ones who attacked the Armenians are such personas and they are the special subjects of the Sultan. The offenses and flagrancies that are against Muslims are not lower than the Armenians. If the Kurds and the Armenians want to get rid of such events and cruelties, they should collaborate and cooperate with each other." [382]

The declaration of the Second Constitution created a public sphere in which the conflicts between Kurds and Armenians began to be discussed openly. Several pro and anti government newspapers addressed the conflicts between Armenians and Kurds and also suggested possible solutions. There were great expectations from the

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[380] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 74.

[381]Bedirhan, "Belge; Kürdistan Ayaklanması." See also; Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, pp. 163-78.

[382]Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898 - 1902*, p. 470. "*Sonuç olarak, Ermenilere saldıranlar bu gibi adamlardır ve onlar da padişahın has kullarındandır; Müslümanlar hakkında dahi yaptıkları çirkinlik ve iğrençlikler, Ermenilere yapılandan aşağı değildir. Ermeniler olsun Kürtler olsun, bu durumlardan, bu zulûmlerden kurtulmak istiyorlarsa, bunu birleşib, dayanaşmakla yapabilirler."*

Constitutional rule like settling the peace in the eastern territories of the empire and giving an end to the ethnic conflicts. In 1909, *Tashnaktsutiun* organized a confeence in which Abdurrahman Bedirxan and Hüseyin Bedirxan also joined. Abdurrahman Bey, after mentioning their struggle against Hamidian rule, stressed the importance of the Armenian – Kurdish brotherhood, similarities between these two communities and the need to alliance for the well being of the Ottoman Empire.[383] During the conference, several other Armenian and Kurdish intellectuals like Hüseyin Bedirxan and Haçadur Efendi mentioned that old disputes between Kurds and Armenians would not be repeated hereupon and both communities would work for the benefits of their nation (here nation refers to the Ottomans).

As Roderic H. Davison argues, "during the Constitutional Period the chief source of conflict between Kurds and Armenians was the land problem. Wandering Kurds, or *muhajirs,* had seized the lands of Armenians who had been massacred and had fled, in 1895."[384] The declaration of the Second Constitution gave hopes to the Armenians whose lands and properties were seized forcefully by Kurdish tribes during the reign of the Abdulhamid II. Murat Koptaş argues that the expectation of the Armenians in solving the land issue was the most important motivation of their support to Constitutional Revolution.[385] From different parts of the eastern vilâyets of the empire, Armenian peasantry had sent several petitions to the state in order to get

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[383] Bedirhan Paşazâde Abdurrahman Bey Efendi'nin İrad ettikleri Nutk-ı Baliğ", *Kurdistan*, no: 3, 5 Safer 1327, (26 February, 1909), pp. 2-3 "*Yıldızın hüküm fermâ olduğu zamanlarda birbirini öldürmekle uğraşan Ermeni ve Kürdler öpüşdüler. Kardaş oldular.*

[384] Roderic H. Davison, "The Armenian Crisis 1912-1914," *The American Historical Review* Vol: 53, no. 3 (Apr. 1948).

[385] Murat Koptaş, "Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab" (Boğaziçi University, 2005), p. 111.

their properties, lands and houses back.[386] In the first years of the new regime it seems that the new government was willing to redistribute the lands and properties of the Armenians. It engaged in establishing commissions with the Armenian authorities in order to solve the problem.[387] Like the CUP, Kurdish clubs which opened during the Second Constitutional era had also established commissions in order to solve the land disputes in the region. For instance, Sheikh Abdulkadir, a prominent Kurdish notable from the Nehrî family (also head of the *KTTC*), prepared reports with the Armenian Patriarchate about the affairs in the Eastern Anatolia.[388]

The issue of land disputes between Kurds and Armenians and why it remained unsolved is a topic of another study. However it is obvious that the CUP government also did not want to risk the support of the tribal leaders to the new government and feared a possible alliance between them and Russians. So, the new government played a balanced policy towards these two ethnicities which made impossible the solution of agrarian question. In 1912, when Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was active among Kurdish tribes for an independent Kurdish state, in a cipher text written from Erzurum (most probably written by governor, Mehmed Emin), it was stated that Kurdish tribes were bearing grudge and hostility against the Armenians because of the land disputes and urged the central state about the possibility of a conflict in the region. Another concern of the governor was a possible alliance of

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[386] BOA, DH.MKT 2789/89 (8 April 1908) *"Bî-tapu mutasarrıf oldukları arâzî ve çiftliğin Hamidiye Hafif Süvari alayları taburu ümerasında Hüseyin Bey tarafından cebren ve tegâlüben zabt olunduğundan bahs ile eshâbına iâdesi istirhâmını mumaileyhin itisafat-ı sairesinden şikayete havi Kangal Kazasına tabi Muhlik Karyesi Ermeni ahâlîsi taraflarından Meclis-i Mebûsan riyâset-i celilesine gönderilüp...*

[387] Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914* , p. 59. Murat Koptaş also mentions about the negotiations between CUP and Taşnaksutyun in solving the agrarian question. See Koptaş, "Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab", pp. 111-14.

[388] Duman, "The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(S) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism", p. 60.

such disaffected Kurdish tribes with Abdurrezzak Bedirxan (who was trying to gain support of Kurdish tribes for his nationalist cause) or their alliance with Russian Empire. [389]

The conflicts between the Kurds and the Armenians increased again when the reforms for the Armenians began to be discussed in the national and international arena. In December 1912, the Ottoman government elaborated a new reform plan for the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbekir and Kharput. Like most of the reform efforts for Armenians this was also because of the external factors.[390] What made the CUP government elaborate a reform program was the will to diminish foreign intervention in the Armenian issue. Kurdish intellectuals from diverse political backgrounds were also involved in the issue. In January 1913, Abdullah Cevdet in his article "Kurdistan ve Ermenistan Mefhumları" (*Concepts of Kurdistan and Armenia*) gave a response to an article published in Armenian newspaper *Jamanak.* Cevdet tried to give answers to two questions presented by the Armenian author under the title of "Armenia or Kurdistan?" First question was; if a country existed in the name of Kurdistan what are the boundaries of it and which Ottoman *vilâyets* are included? Second; if one wants to learn about the process of the Kurdish progress what are the sources that one can look at? Cevdet by protecting his Ottomanist position points out the uselessness of the debates on the concepts of "Armenia" and "Kurdistan," but at the same time mentions Kurdish emirates that were established in the middle ages, in Diyarbekir,

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[389] BOA, DH.SYS 17/90, (1330.3.6)

[390] Davison, "The Armenian Crisis 1912-1914."

Van, Cezire and etc. by referring to the *Sharafname*.[391] In response to the second question Cevdet argued that neither Kurds and nor Armenians had their own Shakespeare, Moliere, Gutenberg and etc. and both millets (*anâsırs*) were far from having a history of civilization. The answers of Abdullah Cevdet should not be interpreted as a response shaped by Kurdish nationalist feelings. Throughout his article he tried to answer the questions posed by the *Jamanak* through an Ottomanist vision. Bedirxan Pashazades were also following the debate going on between *Jamanak* and *İctihad* from Bohtan. They congratulated Abdullah Cevdet because of his response to the *Jamanak* by sending a telegraph to him. They also invited Cevdet to Kurdistan in order to discuss these problems.[392]

In February 1913, Kamil, Hasan, Hüseyin and Süleyman Bedirxan also sent a petition to the state claiming that;

> My Sultan, we have heard that the Armenians will be granted some privileges against the loyal Kurdish *millet*. It is necessary for the honor of the caliphate to grant the privileges and favors for the subjects in an egalitarian way. Otherwise, unrest will occur in Ottoman Kurdistan...[393]

The warnings of Bedirxan Pashazades proved to be right. In April 1913 the situation got even worse, the British Vice consulate reported that "Kurds were collecting arms and assembling meetings and Hüseyin Bedirxan had claimed that

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[391]Hanioğlu M. Şükrü, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet Ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981), pp. 315-16. Ünal, "2. Meşrutiyet, Ulusçuluk Ve Kürt Ayrılıkçı Hareketi." p. 101, See also: Abdullah Cevdet, "Kürdistan ve Ermenistan Mefhumları," *İctihad,* no.50 (16 Kanun-i Sani 1328)

[392] M. Şükrü, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet Ve Dönemi*, p. 323.

[393] BOA, DH.SYS 100/4, 1331.8.4 "*Padişahımız Ermeni milletini Kürd millet-i sâdıkasına tercihen bazı imtiyazatın ihsan buyurulacağı mesmu'-ı ubeydanemiz oldu. Inâyet ve ihsanın sami-i sâdıka kulları hakkında mütesâviyan tatbiki şân-ı hilâfet muktezâtından aksi hal Kürdistan-ı Osmaniyede mehâlike ve müşkilât-ı azime tevlîd edecekdir. Fermân padişahımız, efendimiz hazretlerinindir."*

an Armenian principality was about to be established and called the Kurds to rise in revolt to protect their national existence."[394] Kurdish notables considered such reform attempts as a threat to their "national existence." Yet such reactions were not only shaped because of their ethnic identity. As an Ottoman subject, they were against the reforms which did not take Kurds into consideration.

However, contrary to the Bohtan, Kurdish nationalists at the Ottoman- Iran border gave a more strict reaction to the Armenian Reform debates. In October 1913 Kurdish Committee[395] headed byAbdurrezzak Bedirxan organized a meeting. The decisions of the committee were published in the local Armenian newspaper "Haratch" by Abdurrezzak Bedirxan. One of the decisions of the committee was directly related to the Armenian reform debates;

> As the Ottoman Government has unwillingly contested that the six vilâyets should be sacrificed to the benefits of Armenians under the name of Armenian reforms, it is necessary to protest against these decisions from now, and until all the under [sic] nationalities in the country besides the Armenians consent to the above decision, let us by force of arms turn out all the Ottoman officials of the provinces, districts, sub-districts, shires and form a new government to be governed by men elected by the nation.[396]

Abdurrezzak Bedirxan also criticized the reform attempts which did not take the Kurds into consideration. However, his reaction had a more nationalistic tone than the others. The mentioned six provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum, Sivas, Kharput and Diyarbekir were settled both by the Kurds and the Armenians. These provinces were both considered as parts of historical Armenia and Kurdistan by the Armenian and

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[394] Muammer Demirel, *British Documents on Armenians* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), p. 583. See also; Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914* , p. 182.

[395] This organization will be mentioned in the next part in a more detailed way since Bedirxanis actively participated in it.

[396] FO, 195/2450, p. 83-87 in Demirel, p. 625

Kurdish nationalists. As Abdurrezzak Bedirxan claims;

> We do not however say that we will not accept the decisions of the six powers, but the population of the provinces which were considered with the name of Armenia and those of other places are four by five are consisted of Kurds, and they own most of the lands, and therefore their rights and interests come first.[397]

Thus it can be argued that in its early phases "Kurdish nationalism" was being shaped vis-a-vis an "Armenian threat," a possible Armenian state. Living at the same territory with the Armenians triggered the articulation of the nationalist feelings among Kurdish intellectuals. Actually, Armenians were always considered as a model for the progress of the Kurdish nation by the intellectuals and political activists of the Kurdish society as clearly seen in Kurdish newspapers of the period.[398] However, reforms for Armenians was regarded as an intervention of the foreign powers, an attempt to open the way for an Armenian state on the Kurdish populated areas.

A Kurd or an Ottoman; Multiple Identities and Multiple Loyalties

From now on I will discuss how above mentioned developments led family members to pursue different political ideologies. During the Second Constitutional Era, most of the governmental reports represented Bedirxan Pashazades as Kurdish nationalists who aimed to establish a Kurdish state or Kurdish principality. Scholars who have focused on these reports agree with the CUP governors.[399] However several telegrams, articles, conversations clearly indicate that still Ottomanism was an important ideology and identity among the members of Bedirxani Family. That is to

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[397] Ibid, p. 624

[398] Duman, "The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(S) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism", p. 127.

[399] For instance see: Ünal, "2. Meşrutiyet, Ulusçuluk Ve Kürt Ayrılıkçı Hareketi."

say, it is necessary to be very careful while interpreting "the identities" and "politics" of the Bedirxan Pashazades while referring to the CUP reports. The representation of a Kurdish intellectual as "secessionist" by a provincial governor or by a military official does not always mean that they were totally following a separatist policy. Of course there were moments in which Kurdish intellectuals broke up with the Ottoman Empire as going to be revealed in the case of Yusuf Kamil, Süleyman and Abdurrezzak. However several others although while working for the material and educational and social progress of the Kurds, also protected their Ottomanist inclinations for a long period.

The Ottomanist inclinations of Hasan, Hüseyin, Kamil and Süleyman are best revealed in their reaction against the policies of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan. Contrary to the other family members, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had been active in the Empire's eastern border for an independent Kurdish state.[400] After his return from exile, he had established links with the Kurdish tribes of Iran and Ottoman Empire. In early 1913, the region was in turmoil because of the political propaganda of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan among the Kurdish tribes. There was a rumor in Cezire and Bohtan regions that he was going to establish an autonomous Kurdish state with the help of Russia in the approaching summer.[401] What makes the situation interesting was that Kamil, Hasan and Hüseyin Bedirxan in February 1913, sent a telegraph to the central state demanding enough guns for the Kurdish tribes in order to defend their nation both

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[400] Political activities of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan is going to be mentioned in a detailed way in next part.

[401] FO, 371/1773, No: 21757 in Demirel, p. 577, See also; BOA, BEO, 4133/309921, (1331.5.3)

against Abdurrezzak Bedirxan and Russia.[402] Fatih Ünal interprets the attention drawn by Bedirxan Pashazades to a possible Russian occupation as a pretext for arming Kurds for their revolt.[403] However, according to my opinion the Bedirxan Pashazades really feared a Russian occupation at that moment. They neither wanted to cut off all their relationship with the Ottoman state nor wanted to lose their tribal support. Since Kurdish tribes of Bohtan felt themselves under the threat of a Russian occupation or a possible Armenian state, Bedirxan Pashazades also acted according to the mood of the local population. A similar telegraph was also sent by the rural notables and tribal leaders who supported Bedirxan Pashazades in the elections of 1912. They also warned the government that if the state had not provided guns they would act together with the Bedirxanis in order to protect their nation.[404] In another telegraph they also urged that if they had not been armed they would migrate from the region.[405] By looking at these telegraphs it cannot also be concluded that Hasan, Hüseyin and Kamil Bedirxan aimed only to defend the Ottoman Empire. It was also a struggle for the leadership of the Kurds among the family itself. Since Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had already established contacts with the Russian authorities, Ottoman state was the only possible ally for the Bedirxanis who were in Bohtan. Malmisanij by referring Lazarev also mentions the division between Abdurrezzak and Hasan

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[402]BOA, DH.SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4) "*Rusya, Kürdistan'ın şekl-i hükümetini tegayyüre Abdurrezzak'ı alet-i ittihâz ederek aşâire silah tevdi' itmekde olduğu mevşuken istihbâr olunmuşdur. Mâlûmât-ı maaruza hilâf-ı hakikat olduğu takdîrde tekzib, değilse vatanımızı pay-ı tahkir-i â'dadan muhâfaza itmek asl-ı yeganesiyle aşâirden gönüllü allayları teşkil etmek üzere mikdâr-ı kâfi eslihânın heman isali. Bir cevab-ı mukni'ye destres olunamadığı halde gayet mukaddes ve muazzez bildiğimiz vatanımızı kendi başımıza tasallutât-ı â'dadan himayesi esbâb-ı lazımesine tevvessül itmeyi vazife-i mukaddese-i vataniyeden biliriz. Fermân.*"

[403]Ünal, "2. Meşrutiyet, Ulusçuluk Ve Kürt Ayrılıkçı Hareketi,", p. 93-94.

[404] Ibid.: , p. 94. See also; BOA, DH.SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4)

[405] BOA, DH.ŞFR 507/101, (20.Ks.1331)

Bedirxan claiming that although the former was inclined towards Russians the later one followed a pro-British policy.[406] What mobilized the local aghas to act with the Bedirxanis was the fear of the Russian occupation. Instead of Russian authority, they were in favor of an Ottoman administration which did not target their power. Bedirxanis who were supporting a decentralist empire and criticizing the CUP were the best allies for local aghas.

A month later in February 1913, Hasan and Süleyman Bedirxan arranged a meeting with the *mutasarrıf* of Mardin. During their conversation, they tried to convince the *mutasarrıf* of Mardin that they were loyal subjects of the Ottoman Empire and also against the idea of the Kurdish autonomy under Russian domination. They also claimed that because of the oppression and bribery of the officials, local Kurds were inclined to Russian domination. Thus the main reason behind their visits to the Kurdish tribes was the will to diminish the influence of Abdurrezzak and to take precautions against a possible revolt. They also demanded employment of Kamil and Süleyman, who had graduated from the Mekteb-i Sultani, in one of the positions in the region.[407]

Before 1913, it is hard to claim that the Bedirxanis who were active in the Bohtan were passionate Kurdish nationalists. Although "separatist" voices arose when the family members clashed with the central state, such voices were not solely the result of the nationalist feelings. The years of 1912 and 1913 were the years when the Ottoman Empire was witnessing several changes. The Balkan Wars and Albanian Independence, the Armenian Reform debates, the CUP's centralist and Turkist policies had triggered in very complex attitudes in Kurdish provinces. Such

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[406] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 139.

[407] BOA, DH.SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4)

developments had also reflections on Kurdish identities and loyalties. Although the above mentioned events triggered their Kurdish nationalist feelings, they did not totally break up with the Ottoman Empire. As explained in the third chapter, by focusing on Abdurrahman Bedirxan, rather than fixed identities like "Kurdish nationalism" and "Ottomanism" most of the Kurdish intellectuals had multiple identities and multiple loyalties at those times.

For instance; Hüseyin Bedirxan was the most active and influential member of the Bedirxani family who had great support among the Kurds of Cezire and Bohtan. He was one of the most outstanding Kurdish elites of the time, defending the rights of the Kurds in the empire and resisting the policies of the CUP government. He was found as "danger" for the security of the region and appointed as *mutasarrıf* to Kırşehir. As discussed in the third chapter such a policy, giving governmental posts to the elites of the Kurds had been used extensively during the Hamidian era in order to neutralize or incorporate disaffected circles into the centre. Since Hüseyin Pasha was well aware of this policy, he kindly rejected the new appointment with a telegram.[408] Yet he also applied to the government to collect volunteers from the Kurdish region in order to participate in the Balkan Wars to show his loyalty to the state and acted as a mediator during the conflict between central state and Çelikli Derviş Agha.[409] However, in May 1913, he died disputably.[410] Local officers who had been close to the CUP were suspected of the murder. Although his activities were interpreted by the CUP bureaucrats and officials as secessionist (this is why some of the scholars also regarded him as separatist - nationalist), and also at the

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[408]BOA, DH.SYS 100/4, (1331.8.4).

[409] Önemli Şahsîyetlerin Hayatı; Bedirhani Hüseyin Paşa, *Roj-i Kurd*, 1 Ağustos 1329.

[410] In 1919, Ahmed Nedim (old governor of Bitlis) and Sadreddin Bey (old muttasarrıf of Siirt) were tried by court because of killing Bedirxani Husseyin see; BOA, DH.HMŞ, 3/1/-131 (14.M. 1338)

times of crisis he expressed his will of separation, it is not clear that he was a passionate Kurdish nationalist. Hüseyin Pasha mostly remained in favor of an Ottoman Empire in which Kurds were enjoying great self governance in their own region and as an educated Kurd he was wishing to take part in local administration or wanted to be the leader of Kurdish community in a decentralist empire. Rather than calling him as a full-fledged Kurdish nationalist or Ottomanist, it would be better to call him as an Ottoman-Kurdish because of his multiple political loyalties, if necessary.

Also Hasan Bedirxan who was one of the active members of the family in Bohtan between the years 1910-1915 was always open to the negotiations with the state. Like his brother Hüseyin, he had a great authority over the Kurdish tribes of Cezire and Bohtan and criticizing the CUP policy and had contacts with the liberal circles. He also refused to be appointed to the one of the *mutasarrıflık* in Anatolia and demanded a post in Mardin or Siird. During a conversation with the British vice consul of Diyarbekir he had claimed that his goal was to obtain privileges for the Kurds "similar to those which the Arabs had demanded, such as that government officials in Kurdistan should be familiar with Kurdish; that the money obtained by local taxation should be used for the local prosperity, in building roads and bettering educational facilities etc."[411] As understood from such demands, Hasan Bedirxan seemed to be in favor of a decentralist empire in which Kurdish region enjoyed great self governance. Yet he was not in favor of a separatist Kurdish state and even if so he did not follow such a policy. Contrary to the Abdurrezzak and Yusuf Kamil Bedirxan, Hasan Bedirxan remained in Diyarbekir and tried to establish contacts with the central state. During the WWI, he had applied to the government in order to

[411]Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914* , p. 215.

collect volunteers from the region for the ongoing war. However his application was rejected by Talat Pasha.[412] Since the Ottoman government did not believe in the loyalty of the Bedirxani family, he was brought to the Konya during the early years of the war.[413]

Another member of the Bedirxani family, Mikdat Bedirxan, also had protected his Ottomanist inclinations. He published the first Kurdish newspaper *Kurdistan* and joined the Young Turk movement during the Hamidian era. He returned to the Bohtan after the consolidation of the Constitutional regime and worked for bettering the educational facilities of the Kurds as mentioned in this chapter. Contrary to Hasan and Hüseyin he had to leave the region because of the pressures of the officials. He was appointed as *mutasarrıf* to Dersim in 1912[414] and secured his post until the Bab-ı Ali *coup d'état* in 23 January 1913. It seems that Mikdat Bedirxan was also opposed to the CUP regime and politically was closer to the liberals. He was appointed to Dersim when the Liberal Entente benefited from a government change following the elections of 1912. In *Tanzimat*, an official newspaper of the HIF published by Lütfü Fikri, it is stated that Mikdat Bedirxan would be a better *mutasarrıf* than old one[415] as he had relations with the CUP. At the beginning of the World War I, he applied to the central state for collecting men from the Dersim district for the ongoing war but again the central government kindly

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[412] BOA, DH. ŞFR 53/344 (1333.B.30) "*Bedirhan ailesine hiçbir zaman emniyet olunamaz. Binaen 'aleyh ne Hasan Bey'den ne de başına toplayacağı gönüllülerden istifâde ihtimâli yokdur. Kendisinin yerinde kalması daha münâsibdir"*

[413] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 523/7, (1332. Ma. 30)

[414] Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetsi Kurdistan'ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan (1868-1936)*, p. 112-13.

[415]"Dersim Mutasarrıfı, Tanzimat, 25 Ağustos 1328 (7 Eylül 1912), "*Kaldı ki mutasarrıf-ı cedide Bedirhanzâde Midhat Bey mensûb olduğu hanedanın Dersimce olan mevki'-i mahsûsuna ve bizzat mutassıf olduğu evsâf ve mezâyâya nazaren Dersimin têmin-i sükûnunda (Tanin) emin olsun – Sabit Beyden bin kat ziyade muvaffak olacakdır."*

rejected his demand.[416]

As clearly seen Hüseyin, Hasan and Midhat Bedirxan did not totally break off their ties with the Ottoman Empire although they were against the CUP. Three of them had worked for the material, educational and social progress of Kurds, collaborated with the liberal circles of the empire, demanded a post in Kurdistan and was active for leadership of the Kurdish community in a decentralized Empire. However, they also protected their Ottomanist inclinations. Thus instead of calling three of them as "Kurdish nationalist" or "Ottomanist," I would rather call them as Ottoman- Kurdish activists. That is to say, they had multiple identities and multiple loyalties at the same time which seemed not to be mutually exclusive. The Ottomanist inclinations were not peculiar to the Kurdish intellectuals of the period. It can also be clearly seen among a variety of intellectuals coming from different ethnic backgrounds like Arab Shukri Al Asali, Armenian Krikor Zohrab, Süryani Aşur Yusuf and Albanian Şemseddin Sami Frasheri[417].

Kurdish Nationalists attempts' in Transforming Tribal Disaffection into a Popular Movement

Allegiance to the Ottoman Empire while protecting the rights of the Kurds was not the only political alternative for the Bedirxanis or for other Kurdish political activists.

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[416] BOA, BEO, 4099/307417, (1330.Za.06.)

[417] For Şemseddin Sami see: Bilmez, "Modern Ve Geleneksel Kolektif Kimlikler Ile Osmanlı Vatandaşlığı Arasında; Osmanlı Aydını Üzerine Notlar." For Âşûr Yusuf see: Harany, "Intibâh or Hâb-ı Gaflet : Âşûr Yûsuf, Naûm Faîk and the Ottoman Süryânî ". For Krikor Zohrab see: Koptaş, "Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab". And for Shukri al 'Asali see: Samir Seikaly, "Shukri Al 'Asali: A Case Study of Political Activist," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. Rashid Khalidi, et al. (New York Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 91.

Exclusion of the family members from political domain, the Armenian reform debates, the Albanian Independence (1912), and territorial loses after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) also led some family members to search for new allegiances and follow a secessionist policy. This also shows us the heterogeneity of the identities and loyalties that existed among Kurdish intellectuals before the First World War.

After the death of the Hüseyin Bedirxan in 1913, Kamil Bedirxan redefined his political position and engaged in establishing contacts with Russia, the only powerful state which might support the idea of Kurdish independence. He established contacts with the Russian authorities as a Kurdish delegate and discussed whether they would give support for the idea of a Kurdish principality or not in late 1913.[418] Like Yusuf Kamil, Süleyman Bedirxan also engaged in searching new alliances. He also established contacts with the Russian authorities in order to establish an autonomous Kurdish principality under the hegemony of the Russian Empire.[419]

It is not clear why Hasan, Midhat and Hüseyin did not totally break up with the Ottoman Empire while others like Yusuf Kamil and Süleyman engaged in searching new alliances for their nationalist purposes. A possible answer might be their contacts. Both Yusuf Kamil and Süleyman were active in the provinces like Bitlis and Van, where Kurdish nationalist organizations like the Kurdistan Salvation Committee, were active and where ethnic conflicts were intense. They probably established new contacts in those regions or they might be influenced by their nephew's (Abdurrezzak Bedirxan) struggle and by his success in taking the support theof Russian Empire. Before discussing the nationalist activities of Kamil and

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[418] Celîlê Celîl, *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak* (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2007), p. 118

[419] Malmîsanij, *Cızire Botanlı Bedirhaniler Ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları*, p. 211.

Süleyman Bedirxan after 1913, it will be better to focus on Abdurrezzak Bedirxan who had already followed a seccessionist policy after his return from exile (1910), and gained a following among nationalist circles.

Contrary to his contemporaries, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had a different life and political vision. His political and cultural activities, his alliances and contacts have attracted the attention of several scholars.[420] He took his early education in *Sıbyan* and *Rüşdiye* schools and learned Arabic, Persian, French[421] and also Russian. In 1885, he worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; in 1889 he worked in the Ottoman consulate of St. Petersburg and in 1890 in the Ottoman consulate of Tehran.[422] His occupation in the Ministry of foreign Affairs and consulates of Petersburg and Tehran provided him not only the circles in the mentioned places but also enabled him to be familiar with foreign politics and world ideologies.

It is not clear that when he broke up his ties with Ottoman Empire and began to think about the idea of a Kurdish principality. He had visited the Kurdish region twice by passing through Russian territories, an action that was not welcomed by the palace. The only evidence about his first visit is a police interrogation report dated to 1892 and a letter written in 1910. Historical sources contain different and contradictory information on the subject. Since his letter was written eighteen years after his first visit, when he was politically more active, his comments on the past

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[420] See for instance Fatih Ünal, "Rusların Kürt Aşiretlerini Osmanlı Devletine Karşı Kullanma Çabaları," *Türk Yurdu* 28 (60), no. 254 (615) (December 2008).and also Salahi R. Sonyel, *Gizli Belgelerde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Son Dönemi Ve Türkiye'yi Bölme Çabaları* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2009), pp. 170-90. For a recent and more sophisticate study on Abdurrezzak Bedirxan see: Michael A Reynolds, "Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Euroasian History* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2011).

[421] BOA, DH.SAİD (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records), 22/234

[422] BOA, DH.SAİD (Sicill-i Ahvâl Records), 22/234 Although in his Sicill-i ahvâl record it is written that he had began to work in Tehran consulate in 1890, in his memoirs he claims that he had to turn back to Istanbul while he was on the road to Tehran because of a political plot organized against him. See: Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya*, p. 15.

bear the influence of his predilections.[423] Since the second source was a police interrogation report, the given information also bears the possibility of contorted information.[424] In his letter, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan argues that his first attempt to enter Kurdistan was shaped by his political intentions. According to this letter, by this first attempt he had aimed to establish contacts with the Russian authorities in order to take their support for the claims of the Kurds.[425] On the other hand in the police interrogation report, he noted that by this travel he wanted to take the attention of the Sultan, since he was unfairly dismissed from his post. Secondly, he claimed that he wanted to manage the properties and lands of his grandfather Bedirxan Beg which had been in the provinces of Bitlis and Van and had been abandoned since the Tanzimat.[426] As mentioned in the third chapter, the palace paid great attention to his activities in the region. Local governors also asserted that he was in alliance with Armenians and Nestorians and was trying to create a conflict in the region. Although his activities did not result in any "trouble" for the Ottoman Empire, he had established some contacts in Odessa, Batumi, Tblisi, Revan, Şahtak, Diyman and Khoy from which he was going to benefit in the future. Later the palace kept him in Istanbul by appointing him as the master of ceremonies (Saray Teşrifatçısı) in 1894. From a petition sent by him in 1897, it is understood that he was still working in the palace as a master of the ceremonies.[427]

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[423] Ibid.

[424] BOA, Y.A.HUS 264/205, (1310.S.29)

[425] Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya*, p. 24.

[426] BOA, Y.A.HUS 264/205, (1310.S.29)

[427] BOA, ŞD 370/34, (1315 L 17)

Another important detail about the life of Abdurrezzak is the fact that he had not had good relations with other family members. During the reign of the Abdulhamid II, the main conflict between him and the other family members was because of the portioning of the Bedirxan Pasha's inheritance.[428] During the Constitutional era his conflicts with other family members were mainly derived from their political choices. As shown in this chapter, contrary to the Bedirxanis in Bohtan, he was mostly active at the Ottoman – Iranian border and followed a different political program which also drew the reactions of other family members.

When the mayor of Istanbul, Ismail Rıdvan Pasha was killed by the Bedirxanis in 1906, much of the responsibility was put on Abdurrezzak Bedirxan. After the trial he was sentenced to death and sent to Tripoli. He was imprisoned in Tripoli until 1910. When he returned from Tripoli, he witnessed the political change in Istanbul and established contacts with the Russian consulate of Istanbul in order to pass to Russia.[429] A short period after his arrival in the Russian territories, he established contacts with the local Kurdish tribes for an independent or autonomous Kurdish state under the protection of the Russian Empire. It is hard to determine when exactly he turned against the CUP. Yet immediately after he returned from the exile he wrote a letter to the N.Ç Çarikov, the Russian Consul of Istanbul. After mentioning the rough times that he had experienced during the Hamidian Regime and his disappointment from the Constitutional Rule he claimed that; "All my rights taken from me, and even after my pardon and liberation, I could not benefit from these rights (…).I believe that Turkey cannot be a real homeland for Kurdish *mirs* and their children. As called by the great Voltaire "The only place where I can live

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[428] BOA, ŞD 370/34, (1315 L 17)

[429] Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya*, pp. 11-19.

with freedom is my country." [430]

Although he did not have any article published in any Ottoman newspapers, the letters written by him to the tribal leaders and his proclamations published in the newspapers, and his memoirs included information about his perception of world, his political ideas and activities. After his arrival to the border, he immediately established contacts with the tribes in Iran. The tribe of Shekak at the Ottoman – Iranian border was one with which Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was mostly in contact. In one of his letters that was written to Ismail Agha of Shekak and Cihangirzâde Teymur Agha, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan emphasized not only the importance of the unification of the Kurdish tribes, but also urged Kurdish tribes to collaborate with the Russian Empire. Moreover he declared the Ottoman Empire as infidel power which should not be obeyed.[431] Although the unification of the Kurdish tribes was always mentioned by the urban settled Kurdish political activists, this was not always shaped by nationalist feelings. For Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, the unification of the Kurdish tribes was necessary in order to defeat the Young Turks. However, since he was aware of the power of Islamic sentiments among Kurdish tribes, he appealed to them through an Islamic discourse.

In the presence of the "dangers" posed by Abdurrezzak as such, the government was not late for the precautions. From the beginning of Abdurrezzak Bedirxanis' arrival to the Ottoman – Persian border, the CUP attempted to neutralize him since he had also contacts with the Russians. As he was travelling in a region where Ottoman power was weak, the CUP did not have any power to control him.

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[430] Ibid., pp. 17-18. "*Tüm haklarım elimden alındığı gibi, serbest bırakıldıktan sonra da bu haklardan yararlanamadım. (...) İnancıma göre, bizim için Kürt mirleri ve çocuklarına Türkiye gerçek vatan olamaz. Büyük Voltaire'in de belirttiği üzere benim özgür yaşayabildiğim yer benim ülkemdir.*"

[431] Ünal, "Rusların Kürt Aşiretlerini Osmanlı Devletine Karşı Kullanma Çabaları."p.37 See Appendix E for the modern Turkish transcription of the text.

The CUP government applied to the Kurdish circles that had an influence on the Kurds with the aim of neutralizing Abdurrezzak Bedirxan. As it is mentioned in the beginning of this chapter there had already been a rivalry between Bedirxanis and the family of Nehri, for the leadership of the Kurdish community. Since Seyyid Abdülkadir (son of Sheikh Ubeydullah) was close to the government and also had an influence on the Kurdish tribes, the CUP attempted to take his support in dealing with Abdurrezzak Bedirxan.[432] Fatih Ünal argues that the Ottoman government later withdrew its decision of applying to Sheik Abdulkadir as a mediator between disaffected Kurds and the Ottoman Empire, since such a request from a sheikh meant the approval of his influence on Kurds.[433] None of these attempts worked and this time the CUP tried the policy of amnesty which had been used extensively during the reign of Abdulhamid II towards the disaffected Kurdish notables. As it was discussed in the third chapter, the employment of the Kurdish notables in the Ottoman center, displacement and also amnesty were used in order to control the disaffected Kurdish notables. Like in the case of the Hüseyin Bedirxan, the CUP also attempted to control Abdurrezzak Bedirxan through classical control mechanisms.[434]

The activities of Abdurrezzak in the Kurdish region triggered the local governments, and official correspondence bears the traces of this anxiety. In late 1911, it was ordered that Abdurrezzak Bedirxan should be arrested since he was

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[432] BOA, DH.SYS, 24/2-3, (1330.1.30) " *Nevahi-yi Şarkiye'de bir derd-i elim olan Abdurrezzak Beyle, Maku Serdarının ve Simko'nun ayandan Şeyh Abdulkadir Efendi Hazretlerince mümkün olabileceği zehabıyla arz-ı keyfiyet ihtar olunur.* See also: Reynolds, "Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire,", p. 438.

[433] Ünal, "2. Meşrutiyet, Ulusçuluk Ve Kürt Ayrılıkçı Hareketi,", p. 89.

[434] BOA, DH.SYS, 17/90 (1330.3.6)

trying to organize a revolt in Kurdistan.[435] Actually Abdurrezzak Bedirxan never succeeded to enter the Kurdish region except once to Van. Although Lazarev mentions a meeting which was held in Erzurum in February 1912 under the leadership of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, neither Ottoman sources nor the memoirs of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan confirm this information. Abdurrezzak was first settled in Yerevan and Tbilisi, and then mostly traveled in Persian cities like Maku, Khoy and Kotor which were close to the Ottoman border.[436] Such places were more secure than Ottoman Kurdistan, since he was taking the support of the Russians and Kurdish tribes of Persia. Another reason why he did not enter Ottoman Kurdistan was related to his conflicts with other family members. As mentioned earlier, Bedirxanis in Bohtan were against the policy which Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had followed since they had not totally broken up with the Ottoman Empire.

Abdurrezzak Bedirxan as an activist tried to organize the Kurds under some political and cultural organizations. He actively took part in establishing political and cultural organizations in Ottoman and Iranian Kurdistan. The Saviour Committee of Kurdistan (*Kurdistan Halâskâr Komitesi)*[437] and *Gehandin* were two important Kurdish organizations in which he actively participated. Although it is not clear when these organizations were founded and closed, it seems that the first one mostly dealt with the political affairs and the latter worked for the material and educational

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[435] BOA, MV, 152/78, (29.Ca.1329)

[436] BOA, DH.SYS 24/2-1, (1329.5.5)

[437] The name of this organization was passed in a letter sent by Hayrettin Berazi to a Kurd in Van. See: BOA, BEO. 4203/315192, (1331.N.2) In some sources the name of this organization mentioned briefly as "Kurdish Comittee". There is also another organization called as "*Irşad*". It is highly possible that *İrşad* and Savior Comittee of Kurdistan "*Kürdistan Halaskar Komitesi*" were the same organizations. For *Irşad* see: Celîlê Celîl, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler* (Ankara: Özge Yayınları, 1992), p. 202. And Reynolds, "Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire,", p. 431-34.

progress of the Kurds. However, these organizations, contrary to the ones in Istanbul (like *KTTC* and its branches in Kurdish provinces), worked actively for an independent Kurdish entity and were therefore regarded as illegal by the CUP government.

Abdurrezzak Bedirxan as the head of the Gehandini organization engaged in a series of cultural and educational activities while he was living in Khoy during 1913. As a Kurdish nationalist-activist he paid attention to the cultural and educational affairs of the Kurds. Like many Kurdish intellectuals of the time he also had a "civilizing mission" towards the Kurdish community and region.[438] Bruinessen argues that, in 1912, he began to publish *Kurdistan* in Urmiyeh.[439] and also opened a school for Kurdish children by taking the support of the Russian consulate.[440] He also established contacts with the Russian authorities in order to open a Kurdish language department at Petersburg University.[441] As understood from one of his letters he also aimed to translate the Russian classics into Kurdish and wished to prepare a Kurdish dictionary and a grammar book with the help of I. A. Orbeli (a Russian Scholar from Petersburg Imperial University) and Kurdish scholars.[442] Without doubt, Russia also aimed to take the support of the Kurdish population in the politics of the region. That is why it provided financial support to the Kurdish school. The director of the school was a Frenchman who was a citizen of the Russian Empire. The students of the school were mostly from a Kurdish tribe called Abdovi (a sub-tribe of the Shekaki)

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[438] Reynolds, "Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire,", p. 426.

[439]Bruinessen, "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran: The Case of Simko's Revolt,", p. 384.

[440] Celîlê Celîl, *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak* (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2007), p. 81.

[441] Ibid., p. 103.

[442] Ibid.

settled at the Ottoman – Iran border.[443] Furthermore, Simko, the leader of the Şikaki tribe, also engaged in the foundation and activities of the school. Such a school which was very close to the Ottoman border immediately took the attention of the CUP government. The governor of Van sent a telegraph about the school and claimed that;

> The district has been informed that a boarding school under the head of a French from the Russian Citizenship has been opened in Khoy with the encouragement of Abdurrezzak and the help of the Russian Consul. Furthermore it is also known that the bandit Simko has been forcefully taking the children of the Muslim tribes who live in eastern regions and out of border and integrating into the school in which the language of education is Russian. (…) In order to educate the Kurdish children and also make them like the government we also have to quickly open institutions like that school. (…) Therefore what the government should do is to open three boarding schools in the Mahmudi, Hakkari and Gevar districts and gather the children there and give them an Islamic and national education.[444]

As stated above, educational institutions were seen as a way of establishing hegemony in the region. It also shows the asimiliationist and "colonialist" aspects of the CUP government towards the Kurdish community. The reason of Abdurrezzak's concentration on such cultural activities was directly related with his vision of enlightenment. It seems that he was not only reading western classics like Voltaire but also following the works of European scholars on Kurds. Moreover he was also aware of the earlier Kurdish poets like Ehmedê Xani (1651 -1707) and Melayê Ciziri[445] whose works were regarded by some scholars as sources for nationalist feelings. Michael Reynolds rightly argues that "he [Abdurrezzak Bedirxan] saw himself as a national leader engaged in a comprehensive struggle to free "his people"

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[443] BOA, DH.SYS, 121/5, (1332.5.15)

[444] BOA, DH.SYS, 121/5, (1332.5.15) See Appendix K (Document 7) for the modern Turkish transcription of the telegraf.

[445] Bedirhan, *Otobiyografya*, pp. 12-13.

not merely from oppressive political rule but from the burden of a culture that threatened to doom them."[446]

Between 1910 and 1913, the Ottoman Empire witnessed a series of wars and revolts which not only resulted in territorial losses but also in internal conflicts. The Tripoli and The First Balkan Wars had resulted in territorial losses. The Albanian revolts, which had taken place between 1910 and 1912, became influential for the Kurdish notables. In line with these developments, in late 1913, the Kurdish Committee (Savior Committee of Kurdistan) which had been founded by Abdurrezzak Bedirxan at the Ottoman- Iranian border, arranged a meeting. The decisions of the committee were published with an introduction of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan in the Armenian local newspaper *Haratch*.

> 1. To behave as brothers with the officers and the officials who join our fighting men, but to fight and kill those who act against us, looking upon them as traitors to religion, fatherland and nation.
> 2. The Kurds who helped the traitors will be killed and their property will be seized.
> 3. A representative from each tribe and neighborhood should be sent to the principal revolutionary centre which is to be chosen.
> 4. To form a temporary government to decide on our claims and considering the situation of the country, to settle every question and to govern the nation.
> 5. To send a deputation to political circles and to the ambassadors in order to introduce to the great powers the temporary Government of Kurdistan.[447]

The defeats of the Ottoman Empire in the Tripoli and Balkan Wars and also the Albanian independence showed the weakness of the central government. Such defeats were interpreted by the Kurdish notables as the approaching end of the empire. Such defeats were also considered as a chance by the members of the

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[446] Reynolds, "Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire,", p. 414.

[447] FO, 195/2450, p. 83-87 in Demirel, p. 625

committee to rebel against the Ottoman administration. The Kurdish committee was in favor of an independent Kurdish state since it believed that the Ottoman Empire was not powerful to protect the Kurds. The members of the committee were mostly from the local notables, sheiks and aghas that had been disaffected by the centralization attempts of the CUP in the region. However, it is understood from the network of the relations that the most influential members of the Committee were Abdurrezzak Bedirxan and Hayreddin Berazi.

Hayreddin Berazi was a soldier who had deserted the Ottoman army. He was active as a general secretary *(murahhas-ı umumi)* of the Savior Committee of Kurdistan as understood from a letter of him which was captured by local forces. He and other members of the committee worked actively to invite Kurds to join their cause by distributing the decisions of the meeting and other information in the form of pamphlets. Most of these letters and pamphlets directly targeted the CUP government.[448] This immediately took the attention of the central state. Talat Pasha, minister of the interior, urged the local governors to take precautions against the malicious organization (*cemiyet-i fesâdiye*) and their decision of revolution (*mukarrerât-ı ihtilâliye*). Around the same days local governors stated that several letters and pamphlets *(Kürdistan nizamnâmesi)* were captured from different circles in Van. Also some members of the committee like Çerkes Hüseyin, Cafer, Kürd Selim were forced to surrender to the local administration. [449]

Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was pursuing a national program. His memoirs, letters and also the reports of the local governors indicate that he was in favor of an independent state or an autonomous structure. He believed in the fact that without the

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[448] BOA, BEO. 4203/315192, (1331.N.2)

[449]BOA, BEO, 4203/315192, (1331.N.2)

support of a powerful state, Kurds could not achieve such a political aim. Thus what he proposed for the Kurds was an autonomous state that he directed under Russian hegemony. Some of his letters bear the signature of *emir,* a traditional title owned by the pre-Tanzimat Kurdish leaders. Some of the sources define him as sultan or prince. Like other family members he also claimed for the leadership of the Kurdish community. However, contrary to the other family members, he was one of the earliest Kurdish political activists who regarded secessionism as an alternative policy. He was also well aware of the fact that it would be impossible to establish such an aim until all the Kurds in the empire were engaged in a revolt. As understood from Ottoman archives, he had also established contacts with the Kurds in Dersim. During the early years of the First World War, it was noted in a coded text that the unrests among the tribes of Dersim emerged because of the existence of the followers of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, and also because of Russian and Armenian bandits.[450]

An Outcome of Social Disaffection and Nationalist Propaganda: The Revolt of Bitlis (1914)

Although a general uprising under the leadership of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan had been expected by most circles, he had never managed to mobilize Kurdish tribes against the Ottoman administration. Other than a few clashes with the Ottoman army at the border his activities did not turn into a popular movement. Even Kurdish Organizations, the *Gehandin* and *Kurdish Committee* did not have a well planned program to be followed and several members of these committees were arrested in 1913. However in March 1914, a group of Kurdish sheikhs from the *Naqshbandi*

[450] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 512/75, (1331.Şu.26)

order rebelled against the CUP administration which also took the attention of the surrounding states. The revolt was mostly organized by the Lodge of Gayda which was one of the centers of the *Naqshbandi* order in Bitlis.[451] Molla Selim and Seyyid Ali, the leaders of the revolt were from the Hizan, a district of Bitlis, where Kurdish sheikhs and religious groups seemed to have more authority than the central state.

Administrative circles suspected that Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was behind the revolt.[452] From 1911, he had tried to establish contacts with the notables of Hizan and distributed pamphlets to the local population in order to gain their support.[453] Kamil Bedirxan also had relations with sheikhs of Hizan and was active in the surrounding *kazas*. In a report which was prepared by the governor of Bitlis, Mustafa Abdulhalik and a police chief, it was stated that before the revolt, a meeting had been organized in Bitlis with the participation of sheikhs, mullahs and notables of the region. It is reported that during the meeting, a man called Ali had invited the participants to revolt against the Ottoman Empire. During the meeting, it was also stated that, neither the Committee of Union and Progress, nor the Sultan had had any influence in the region. Furthermore, the participants had also discussed a letter which was sent them by Abdurrezzak Bedirxan. Abdurrezzak argued that he was going to establish his principality (*beylik*) and demanded from the notables not to support the government.[454] Since this revolt took place when the Bedirxanis had been still active in the region, it will be better to focus on the development and motivations of the revolt briefly.

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[451] BOA, DH.EMN.EUM, 77/2, (1332.B.9)

[452] Celîl, *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak*, p. 128.

[453] BOA, BEO, 3982/298248, (1330.M.32)

[454] BOA, DH.EUM.EMN, 77/2, (1332.B.9)

Like most Kurdish revolts, the character of Molla Selim revolt is also a matter of debate in academia.[455] However by looking at different sources it can be argued that the revolt was the consequence of various factors and mostly shaped by the complex politics of the region and time. The Armenian reform debates, the reactionary attitude towards the CUP government, nationalistic activities of the Kurdish intellectuals like Bedirxanis, Russian policies towards the Kurds were all incentives for the revolt.

The Armenian reform debates which had begun in late 1912 did not reach a conclusion until February 1914. According to the Yeniköy Agreement signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire; two inspector generals were going to be appointed in the mentioned six provinces (*vilâyet-i sitte*) who also had the authority to control the administration, army, gendarme and justice and also the problems related to land.[456] Furthermore, Hamidian regiments were going to be "turned into reserve" and to be disarmed, "except in the case of mobilization and maneuvers."[457]

It should not be a coincidence that a month later the Sheikhs of Bitlis revolted against the Ottoman administration. While the revolt was continuing, the governor of Van, Tahsin Bey argued that the gathering in Hizan, where the Sheikh was from, was getting broader and the insurgents demanded the institution of shariah, protested against the Armenian reforms, and demanded the Russian guardianship.[458]

As it is emphasized in this chapter the Armenian reform debates were also not welcomed by the Bedirxanis who were active in Bohtan throughout 1913. Although

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[455] Celîl, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*, p. 201-16.

[456] Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi*, volume 2, part 3, (Ankara; Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1983), p. 169- 170

[457] Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908-1914*

[458] BOA, DH.KMS, 16/30, (1332.R.21)

Abdurrezzak Bedirxan and Bedirxanis in Bohtan were not directly against an Armenian reform program, they considered such attempts unfair since the mentioned reforms did not take Kurds into consideration. This was also one of the feelings that prevailed among the leader cadres of the Bitlis Revolt. The decision to appoint two foreign inspectors to the mentioned provinces was interpreted by local sheikhs as the occupation of the region by the foreign powers. And the CUP government was accused of being unable to govern the empire and protect the Kurds' rights. Even in the distributed pamphlets and letters, they called the CUP government as infidels. It seems that as early as 1911 the Armenians of Hizan had sent a letter to local government in which they were complaining about the pressures of Seyyid Ali who was one of the leaders of the revolt.[459] Thus it is certain that the Armenian issue was one of the most effective factors that led the sheikhs to revolt. However it should be also noted that Molla Selim, who was one of the leaders of the revolt, sent a letter to the Armenian *Murahhasa* in which he claimed that their revolt was not targeting Armenians.[460] Nevertheless, the Armenians in Bitlis naturally became worried about the revolt with the fear that the insurgents would target them, and thus they closed down all their shops.[461]

After the suppression of the revolt, the governors of Erzurum and Van prepared a report in which they explained the motivations of such revolts and movements in the Kurdish provinces. Their report also confirms the above-discussed points. As stated by Mustafa Abdulhalik (the governor of Bitlis) and Hasan Tahsin

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[459] BOA, BEO, 3761/282028, (1328. Ca.28)

[460] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 421/6, (1330.Ma.1)

[461] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 421/36, (1330.Ma.3)

Bey (the governor of Van)[462], Kurds were afraid of the disappearance of Kurdistan.

> The effects of and the tension created by the war have not yet disappeared, and in addition, as the issue of the reforms in the eastern provinces *(vilayat-ı şarkiye)* have appeared in the publications, it influenced the Kurds who tend to be influenced by any kind of indoctrination and ideas. The indoctrination and the attempts which started with the Second Constitution have been refreshed. The known movement of the murdered soldier Hayreddin perfectly pointed this out. (…) Mullahs and aghas who living in regions out of the reach of the government, through referring to the foundation of Armenia, the disappearance of Kurdistan and the betrayal of the government, are making propaganda for the unification of ideas (*tevhid-i efkâr*) and arms. Khalifa Selim and Sheikh Sahabeddin are the individuals who were born out of this mood.[463]

As it was highlighted earlier there was a reactionary attitude against the CUP government from the beginning of the declaration of the Second Constitution. During the years between 1908 and 1914, the local governors sent various reports about individuals and groups who were against the Constitution. After the suppression of the revolt, the governor of Bitlis, Abdulhalik Mustafa stated that in Kurdistan there was a general reactionary attitude towards the government.[464] Molla Selim was also against the CUP administration and demanded the imposition of the shariah law.[465] During the early days of the revolt, he also sent letters to the Kadiri Sheiks where he

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[462] Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda and Hasan Tahsin Uzer are two important governors should be mentioned briefly. During these critical periods they were appointed to critical posts of Kurdistan. Mustafa Abdülhalik was appointed as mutasarrıf of Siird in 1913, than as a governor of the Bitlis in 1914. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic they prepared reports about the Kurds and took actively part in the Turkification of the region. Hasan Tahsin Uzer was also appointed as III. General Inspector (umûmi müfettiş) of the region in 1935. See: Tuğba Yıldırım, ed., *Necmeddin Sahir Sılan Arşivi, Kürt Sorunu Ve Devlet Tedip Ve Tenkil Politikaları (1925-1947)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011).

[463] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 424/15.(1330.N.2) See Appedix K (Document 8) for the modern Turkish transcription of the quotation.

[464] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 426/79, (1330.Ni.30)

[465] Bitlis Vukuatı; İsyan Tamamen Bastırıldı, *Tanin*, 9 Cemaziyyel evvel 1332, p.1

declared Ottoman local officers as infidels.[466]

Taking the statement of the Van governor into consideration, it seems that like Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, Mullah Selim also demanded a kind of autonomy under Russian rule. That also explains why the leaders of the revolt took shelter in the Russian consulate after the revolt was suppressed. The revolt of Molla Selim, began in March 1914, the rebels sieged Bitlis, but did not manage to seize it. A month later the rebels were repelled by the Ottoman army and the leaders of the rebellion harboured in the Russian consulate of Bitlis. After the suppression of the revolt, some of the leaders were executed.[467]

Although it is not clear to what extent Bedirxan Pashazades were involved in the organization of the revolt, it seems that both Süleyman and Kamil Bedirxan had connections with the insurgents. Just after the revolt, in May 1914, Süleyman Bedirxan, together with some Kurds who had participated in the Molla Selim Revolt, engaged in an armed conflict with the government troops in Hazro. During the battle Süleyman Bedirxan was killed and the insurgents moved south to Zaho, which was more secure.[468]

Celilê Celîl argues that not much later, Yusuf Kamil Bedirxan was arrested by the local government and was sent to the Istanbul because of giving support to the Molla Selim Revolt.[469] There, he consulted with the Russian consul of Istanbul. During their meeting, Kamil Bedirxan expressed that he was in favor of an

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[466]BOA, DH.ŞFR, 421/57, (4.Mart.1330)

[467] http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=396 , Fatih Ünal, II. Meşrutiyetin Doğu Anadolu'daki Yansımaları ve Ermeni – Kürt İlişkilerine Tesiri.

[468] BOA, DH.ŞFR 427/99, (12 Mayıs 1330)

[469] Celîl, *Kürt Aydınlanması*, p. 148.

autonomous Kurdish state under Russian suzerainty.[470] When the war began, he moved to Tbilisi and continued his political activities there. During the early years of the war, Kamil Bedirxan attempted to mobilize Kurdish tribes against the Ottoman Empire and to convince them to ally with the Russians, believing in the fact that the only power that would support the idea of a Kurdish state was Russia. In one of the letters which he sent to the Chief of the Haydaranlı tribe he argued that;

> Do not fall in the provocations of the officials of the Young Turk government. The army of the Russian state is a savior. It will bring an end to the unfair cruelty of the Young Turk government against you. You had better immediately obey us.Your life and property will be protected against any kind of attack. Our religion will always be respected. Of course, I will accompany his majesty the general. It is not necessary to obey the Young Turk government. They will be destroyed soon. The lives, properties and honour of the non-muslim communities should be protected from any kind of attack. It is possible that the officials of the Young Turk government make you harass them as they always do. Never be deceived. Do not have any suspicion about the fact that the Russian army will sooner occupy that area. If you attack Christians, certainly you will be punished. I give you my word that, the majesty of Russia will grant the Kurds with independence. Our sheikhs, although they were not involved in the events of Bitlis, were executed. You will not gain anything, if you serve the Turks. [a sentence could not be read] Do not miss this opportunity. Otherwise the Kurdish nation will be destroyed. You will regret this later. Then, it would be too late.[471]

Such letters were also sent to the Kurdish tribes who were close to the CUP. That is why the government could easily access them**.** For instance a similar letter was also sent to the notables of Goyan and was captured by the *kaimakam* of Zaho.[472] But since they were written directly to the second persons, they reflected the pure ideas of the Kurdish nationalist circles. Later, during the early Republican era the Chief of

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[470] Suat Akgül, "Ottoman - Russian Rivalry in the Eastern Anatolia and the Kurds," *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilzation* I (2000): , p. 726.

[471] BOA, DH.ŞFR 453/111 (15 December 1914), See Appendix F for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter.

[472] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 516/17, (02.Ni.1332)

Haydaranlı tribe, Kor Hussen also talked about Kamil Bedirxan ’s letters and also expressed his remorse about his unkind reply.

Another important point here is the warning of Kamil Bedirxan about the possible attacks of the Kurdish tribes on Armenian population. As it was said earlier, the Bedirxanis were against an Armenian reform program which did not take the Kurds into consideration. Contrary to most of the Kurdish circles the Bedirxanis paid attention to an Armenian – Kurdish alliance at the beginning of the Great War. Even Kamil Bedirxan, together with Karekin Pastırmacıyan (the Armenian representative of Erzurum) wrote a declaration about the posiblity of a Kurdish - Armenian alliance.[473]

After the suppression of the revolt, Abdurrezzak Bedirxan returned from Russia. Not much later he arranged a meeting in Khoy with the local notables and sheikhs in order to discuss the recent developments and the political program that they had followed. The Bitlis revolt and its suppression by the Ottoman Empire was also discussed by the Committee. The decisions that were taken during the meeting were sent with an officer to Istanbul. The decisions were as such;

> 1. Since the Bitlis incident has led the Kurds to the idea of revolution and the execution of the sheiks aroused the idea of revenge among them, they are going to prepare for a general movement hereupon.
> 2. For this aim around five hundred weapons provided by Russia should be distributed among the brigand leaders, Simko, Cihangir and Hacı Kulihan and they should be united to find many gangs and dispatch them to the region.
> 3. To murder the Kurdish leaders who seemed to have supported the government.
> 4. The publication of the articles related to the reasons of the Bitlis event, the execution of the sheikhs, the admission and the content of the reforms and their distribution of them to the government institutions via letter carriers.
> 5. Through the seizure of the weapons by attacking the border troops,

[473] Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi, İttihat Ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, p. 274.

> particularly battalion guardhouses, and through demoralizing the soldiers, the idea of Kurdishness should be awakened and the acts of banditry should be slowly expanded inside.
> 6. Armenians and Nestorians will never be attacked; the government alone will be considered as the target.[474]

These decisions were reported by an Ottoman officer and that is why the language of the document was state centered. However these decisions give clues about the ideas of the Kurdish nationalist circles just before the begeinnig of the Great War. Other than Abdurrezzak Bedirxan, Simko, Sait Bey, Arusanlı Hasan Agha, and delegate of the Seyit Taha also joined the meeting. As seen, nationalist circles not only embraced the Molla Selim revolt but also were willing to propagandize it in order to turn their movement into a popular Kurdish movement. Since some of the local Kurdish notables had collaborated with the state in the suppression of the Molla Selim Revolt, the committee took the decision of killing the chiefs of these tribes. One of the decisions was the will to spread Kurdish nationalism among the Kurdish tribes through an armed struggle.

Vali Tahsin Bey, also informed Istanbul that the Kurdish Committee began to implement its decisions by sending Kurdish tribes under the command of Cihangir and Kuli Han into Ottoman territories.[475] In order to prevent the emergence of a popular Kurdish movement, local governors proposed to take some precautions like establishing more police stations, banning publications, using Kurdish tribes who were loyal to the state, and sending more mobile forces on the borderland to pursue the Kurdish tribes.[476] It is interesting that the Ottoman (and later Turkish) states have been trying to suppress the Kurdish movement more than one century in the same

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[474] BOA, DH.EUM. EMN, 74/21, (1332.C.29) See Appendix I for the modern Turkish transcription of the letter. See also; Süphandağ, Büyük Osmanlı Entrikası Hamidiye Alayları, p. 472

[475] BOA, DH.ŞFR 437/75

[476] BOA, DH.EUM. 74/21, (1332.C.29)

manner with the same discourse.

The Great War changed most of the politics of the region, and the attempts of both the Bedirxan Pashazades and other Kurdish political activists of raising a Kurdish national movement failed. Tribal leaders who had acted with the Bedirxanis during the Second Constitutional period, attempted to protect their power in engaging in the politics of the region during the War. For instance Simko who was the leader of the most powerful tribe at the Ottoman – Iranian border and also one of the members of the mentioned Kurdish organization allied with Russia or Ottoman empire from time to time in order to protect his power and to widen his hegemony. Another example would be Agha-Sorzade Abdurrahman who during the Second Constitutional Period acted with Bedirxan Pashazades, supported them in the elections and turned his face to the Ottoman Empire during the war.[477]Yusuf Kamil and Abdurrezzak Bedirxan remained in Russia during the WWI; however they had a limited space of action. Abdurrezzak Bedirxan was executed by the CUP government in Mosul at the end of the War, and Yusuf Kamil lived in Soviet Russia until his death.

As seen in this chapter, when the Constitution was restored in 1908, the Bedirxan Pashazades engaged in the politics of the Empire with great hopes and expectations. During the early years of the Constitution their main goal was to better the social, educational and material facilities of Kurdistan and to give an end to the ethnic conflicts in the region. There was a sincere belief in the power of Ottomanism and the Constitutional Government. The Bedirxanis who had connections with the CUP during the Hamidian era maintained this relation in the early years of the Revolution. However the pressure of the government on family members, and their

[477] BOA.Y.MV 216/19, 19. N. 1337 (19 April 1921) in Süphandağ , p. 490

exclusion from the political domain created disillusionment towards the new regime. The Albanian independence (1912), The Armenian Reform Debates, territorial loses after Balkan Wars (1912) weakened the ties between the Ottoman Government and Bedirxan Pashazades.

All these developments resulted in different identities and loyalties among family members. Although some of them like Hasan, Hüseyin and Midhat kept their Ottomanness while criticizing the CUP government, others like Kamil and Süleyman redefined their political position and joined their nephew Abdurrezzak and tried to turn tribal disaffection into a popular Kurdish movement. What I have tried to do in this chapter is to show how the early Kurdish national movement and its discourses were heterogeneous and fragmented, and how they were shaped by several internal and external factors. That is to say, it is hard to assert a "monolithic" national movement or discourse in the late Ottoman era. Rather than defining the late Ottoman Kurdish movement as "Ottomanism," or "Kurdish nationalism," and "Kurdish cultural nationalism," the full heterogeneity of practices and discourses should be taken into consideration.

Throughout the Second Constitutional era, the Bedirxanis had great authority over tribal populations of Bohtan. They managed to take their support while they were struggling against the CUP administration. Kurdish tribes were also influenced by developments between the years of 1908 and 1914. First and foremost they did not welcome the Constitutional regime since it targeted their power and influence. Because of the CUP's centralist policy, Kurdish tribes of Bohtan approached the Bedirxanis who were opposing the CUP. However the attempts of the Bedirxan Pashazades in turning tribal disaffection into a Kurdish popular movement failed. Therefore, instead of Kurdish nationalist circles, it was the CUP which managed to

take the support of the Kurdish tribes during the WWI. As an actor in politics of region the Kurdish tribes remained close to the Ottoman Empire although they were disaffected by the policies of the CUP during the Constitutional Period. As asserted by Hamit Bozarslan, the Armenian factor played an important role in this tendency. The conflicts between Kurds and Armenians were used by the CUP in order to take the support of the Kurdish tribal population.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this thesis was to present the changing relations, conflicts and conciliations of the Bedirxan Pashazades with the Ottoman state and their encounter with nationalism in the *longue duree*. It focused on both cultural and political activities of the family members during the Hamidian (1876-1908) and Second Constitutional Era (1908-1914). It reached the conclusion that, although the oppressive policies of the Hamidian era (1876-1908) triggered Kurdish intellectuals to collaborate with the CUP and empowered their ties with Ottomanism, the centralist and "colonialist" aspects of the CUP government (1908-1914), which gave no political space to the Kurdish notables, led family members to form or join new oppositional movements. As shown in the fourth chapter, although Hasan, Hüseyin and Mikdat Midhat participated in the anti-CUP Liberal Parties by preserving their Ottomanist inclinations, others like Süleyman and Yusuf Kamil began to work for an independent Kurdish state or principality by joining Abdurrezzak Bedirxan's movement. However the motivations of Kurdish nationalism cannot be reduced to or explained solely in relation to state policies. It was an age of nationalism, thus the intellectuals and political activists of Kurdish society were not only influenced by western ideologies and thoughts, but also by the surrounding national movements in the empire. As it was revealed in the third and fourth chapters, they were carefully observed the developments among Armenian, Albanian and Arab communities, and sometimes were imitated their agendas and discourses.

Bedirxan Pashazades were involved in several clashes with Hamidian rule even before their participation in the CUP movement. As scrutinized in the third chapter the Revolt of 1878 against the empire and their opposition against the Hamidian regiments were derived from the desire to revive the Cezire and Bohtan

Emirate. However from the 1890s on while they were in contact with the Young Turks they meet with new "repertoire of contentions." They actively supported the CUP in its struggle against Hamidian absolutism. Like many circles, they sincerely believed that if the Young Turks could reconsolidate the constitution, and remove the ban on freedom of expression, and provide the right of establishing cultural and political organizations, they could work for the material and educational progress of the Kurds which were also necessary for the well being and modernization of the Ottoman Empire. Several members of family like Mikdat, Abdurrahman, Mehmed Salih and Osman Pasha directly joined the CUP and its branches and supported it by their journalistic activities in Europe and in Egypt.

Following the first years of the 1908 Revolution, family members sincerely supported the idea of Ottomanism and the newly established Constitutional government. *Fraternity*, *equality* and *Justice* were the most repeated words of their articles and speeches. Like many Turkish, Armenian, Arab and Albanian intellectuals and political activists, their main goal was to work for the material and educational progress of their nation *(millet)*. However the belief in the power of the Constitutional Government did not last long. Like oher communities of the empire, they began to have an oppositional attitude towards the CUP government. As stated in the fourth chapter, the CUP's "policy of centralization" enforced with a "colonial mentality" in the region left no political space for the Kurdish elite who were known for their pro-Kurdish political stance. Their activities in ameliorating educational and material facilities of Kurdistan were regarded as "seperatist movements" by the CUP officials after their arrival to the Cezire and Bohtan. As a first step the Kurdish elite took part in the organization of the HIF (Liberal Entente) in order to oppose the CUP. The HIF was a liberal party which was in favor of a decentralist empire and opposed

the centralist policies of the CUP government. Thus most of the Bedirxanis including Hasan, Hüseyin, Süleyman and Midhat actively supported the HIF during the Constitutional era and particularly during the elections of 1912.

Following the elections, although Hasan, Hüseyin and Midhat continued their oppositional attitude against the CUP, they did not totally break up with Ottoman empire. Until 1914 they remained as Liberal Ottoman – Kurdish activists who were in favor of a decentralist empire in which Kurds would enjoy a kind of self governance. Thus Hasan, Hüseyin and Midhat preserved their multiple identities and multiple loyalties until the dismemberment of empire. However, the same process led others to follow alternative and different policies. Süleyman and Yusuf Kamil a year before the outburst of the WWI, broke up their ties with the Ottoman Empire and worked for an independent Kurdish state or Kurdish principality by joining Abdurrezzak Bedirxan.

While discussing their oppositon against the Ottoman government(s), this thesis also showes the difficulties in drawing a monolithic movement regarding the late Ottoman Kurdish history. Rather than defining the activities of the Kurdish intellectuals as "Kurdish nationalism," "Kurdish cultural nationalism" or "Ottomanism," as proposed in second literature, this thesis showes how the demands of the Kurds were heteregenous and fragmented in the context of a single family. Thus instead of envisaging a homogenous and monolithic movement, this thesis focuses on the heterogenity of political/cultural claims. In addition to this, since there were multiple Kurdish movements, and multiple demands among the intellectuals, notables and activists of Kurdish society, it is also hard to divide the development of Kurdish nationalsim into definite periods. Many exceptions exist in the political and cultural activities of the subjects as well as in their demands.

As mentioned before, state policies were not the sole determinant in the development of Kurdish nationalism. Kurdish notables, intellectuals and political activists closely observed the nationalist movements in the empire. Especially the Armenian movement and related developments to Armenian people were closely observed since any development related to them would also influence the future of the Kurds. First of all, during the late Hamidian era and in the first years of the Constiutional Period when Bedirxanîs were sincere believers of Ottomanism, they actively worked for solving the conflicts between Armenians and Kurds and aimed at establishing the brotherhood (*uhuvvet*) and unity (*ittihâd*) between these two elements. As they did not demand independence for Kurds during the mentioned period, they were also against the idea of an independent Armenian state. However from late 1912, when a reform program began to be discussed in order to better the conditions of the Armenians, Bedirxanis regarded it as unfair by claiming that it did not take the claims of the Kurds into consideration. While such reforms were continued to be discussed in the national and international arena, they regarded such attempts as the first steps for founding an Armenian state. Such development led them to redefine their ties with Ottomanness and Ottoman Empire.

A few sentences should also be added about the Kurdish tribes of Cezire and Bohtan. Both during the Hamidian and II Constitutional eras the Bedirxan Pashazades had a certain authority over the tribal populations of Cezire and Bohtan and could mobilize them when they were involved in clashes with the Ottoman state. Several Kurdish tribal leaders who became disaffected with the centralist policies (a more cenralized taxation, conscription, etc.) of the CUP government, actively supported the Bedirxan Pashazades during the II Constitutional era. The support of the Kurdish tribes best revealed itself during the elections of 1912. It seems that like

the Bedirxanis they were also supporting the HIF against the CUP. However in the following years the attempts of Bedirxani Süleyman, Yusuf Kamil and Abdurrezzak in transforming tribal disaffection into a national movement mostly failed. Although most of the Kurdish tribes had a disaffection for the CUP, they did not act together with nationalist circles when the First World Was started. Without doubt the tribes saw these circles not so powerful as to oppose the Ottoman Empire. Moreover these nationalist circles were in contact with the Russians, which was not welcomed by several tribes. The most important factor was the Armenian factor. From the second half of the nineteenth century any development related to Armenian people, had found reflections in different segments of Kurdish society. For instance; The Armenian reform debates before the First World War, was interpreted differently by different segmenets of Kurdish society. Some of the Kurdish intellectuals settled in Istanbul completely suported the new program, others including Bedirxan Pashazades stressed that reforms should be equally implemented among Kurds and Armenians. But several Kurdish tribes regarded it as the disappearance of Kurdistan and the establishment of Armenian state. Thus as mentioned by scholars, the fear of an Armenian state on the Kurdish settled areas led most of the tribal population to collaborate with Ottoman Empire.

While analyzing the encounter of the Bedirxan Pashazades with Kurdish nationalism, this study attempted to illustrate other dynamics that existed in Kurdish settled areas. It showed how any development in the Kurdish society deeply influenced the power politics, identities and loyalties of the family members. As showed, contrary to the existing belief, Istanbul settled Kurdish intellectuals of the late Ottoman era had strong ties with the tribes, sheiks and other segments of Kurdish society and took their support to their different political agendas.

This study showed me that focusing on singular subjects enables a deeper understanding in development of Kurdish nationalsim. Each individual, political activist and intellectual had meet with Kurdish nationalism in different moments with different motivations. Moreover, the claims about Kurds also differed to a great extent. Thus, as repeated many times, any kind of periodization of Kurdish nationalism is impossible, since there were many state of exceptions in the discourse and pratics of nationalist activists.

This thesis focused on the political and cultural activities of the Bedirxan Pashazades covering the years between 1876 and 1914. However, family members continued to play an important role in the Kurdish movement during and after the WWI. Emin Ali and his three sons Celadet, Kamiran and Süreyya Bedirxan were the well known active members of the Bedirxani family. They worked actively in post-war Kurdish organizations like the Society for Advancement of Kurdistan *(Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti)* and Society for Kurdish Social Organization *(Kürd Teşkilat-ı İctîmaiye Cemiyeti)* which demanded autonomy and independence for the Kurds.[478] Celaldet, Kamuran and Süreyya continued their activities mostly in Egypt and Syria after the Turkish Republic was established. Here family members engaged in publishing *Hawar (1932)*, *Ronahi (1942-1945)* and *Roja Nu,* which contributed significantly to studied on Kurdish culture, history and language. Celadet was also elected as the leader of *Hoybun,* a Kurdish nationalist organization opposing the Kemalist Regime in 1927 which played an important role in the organization of several revolts against Republican Turkey. Kamuran and Süreyya also devoted their whole life to struggling for the rights of Kurds in Turkey and the Middle East in general.

[478] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, pp. 95-102.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sicill-i Ahvâl Record of Abdurrezzak Bedirxan (BOA, DH.SAİD, 22/234)

Abdurrezzak Bey Bedirhan Paşazadelerden ve Rumeli Beylerbeyi payelülerinden Tekfurdağı Mutasarrıfı saadetlu Necip Paşa Hazretlerinin mahdumudur. Bin iki yüz seksan bir sene-i hicriyesinde [1864/65] Dersaadet'de tevellüd etmişdir.

Sıbyan ve Rüşdiye mekteblerinde ba'de't tahsil muallimîn-i mahsûsadan Arabi, Farsi ve Fransızca okumuşdur. Arabi, Farsi ve Türkçe ve Fransızca kitâbet eder. Bin iki yüz toksan altı sene-i hicriyesinde [1278/79] on beş yaşında mülazemetle mahkeme-i Temyiz Baş Müdde-i Umumiliği ve muahharen Aydın Sancağı Tahrirât Kalemlerine devam ederek yüz guruş maaşa nail olmuş ve bin üç yüz üç senesi muharremnin dördünde [13 Ekim 188] bin guruş maaş ile hariciye Nezâret-i celilesine Tercüme Otasına bi'l duhul üç yüz yedi senesi rabiü'levvelinin üçünde [28 Ekim 1889] bin tokuz yüz guruş maaş ile Petersburg sefâret-i seniyesi üçüncü kitâbetine ta'yîn kılınmışdır. Bir müddet sonra mezunen Dersaadete gelerek maaş-ı mahsûsu kâfi olmadığından bahisle mahal-i mêmûriyetine avdetinde istinkaf ile tahvil ve terfi'-i mêmûriyeti istida'sında bulunduğuna mebni ilerüde bir mêmûriyet-i münasebeye ta'yîn olunmak üzere üç yüz sekiz senesi cemaziye'levvelinin yirmi üçünde [4 Ocak 1891] infisâl edub sene-i merkume şevvalinin on yedisinde [26 Mayıs 1891] iki bin guruş maaş ile Tahran sefâret-i seniyesi ikinci kitâbeti uhdesine tevcih buyrulmuşdur ve üç yüz yedi senesi rabiü'lahirinin yirmi üçünde [17 Aralık 1889] dördüncü rütbeden Osmani nişan-ı 'alisine ve üç yüz sekiz senesi muharreminin yirmi ikisinde [7 Eylül 1890] rütbe-i saliseye nail olmuşdur.

Hariciye Nezâret-i Celilesinden yazılan mülâhazada mir-i mumaileyhin dâire-i celile-i hariciyeye aid ifâdâtı ve Nezâret-i müşarileyha Sicill-i ahvâl şubesi müdiriyetine hidemât-ı mezkûrede müddet-i istihdâmı ve mikdâr-ı maaşatı ile rütbe-i saliseye dördüncü rütbe-i Osmani nişanına nailiyeti tasdîk edilmişdir. Aydın Sancağı tahrirât Kalemi istihdâmına dair kayd bulunmadığı Aydın vilâyetinin tahrirât-ı cevabiyesinde gösterilmişdir. Fi 4 rebiyyülevvel 1309 ve 25 Eylül 1307 [8 Ekim 1891]

Mumaileyh sene-i merkume zi'l–hicceti'ş şerifesinin ikisinden itibaren "27 Haziran 307" [9 Temmur 1891] mezkûr kitâbet-i mahus olan iki bin guruş maaş ile Hazine-i celileden almak üzere (x) mêmûriyeti tehir olunmuş ve bin üç yüz on iki senesi şaban-ı şerifinin yedisinde ve 22 kânun-i sani 310 [3 Şubat 1895] dört bin guruş maaşla teşrifatı hariciye muavinliğine ta'yîn buyrulmuşdur.

Mumaileyhe Belçika Hükümeti tarafından i'ta olunan Dördüncü Rütbeden (Leopold) Nişanının mumaileyh tarafından kabul oldu. Ale'l icab talikine bin üç yüz on dört

senesi muharremü'l harreminin on dördünde [25 Haziran 1896] müsaade-i seniye-i padişahi erzan buyrulmuşdur.

Appendix B: Sicill-i Ahvâl Record of Hasan Fevzi Bedirxan (BOA, DH.SAİD 18/12)

Hasan Fevzi Bey Bedirhan Paşa mahadimindendir. Bin iki yüz yetmiş beş [1858/59] senesinde Kandiye kasabasında tevellüd etmişdir.

Sıbyan ve Rüşdiye mekteblerinde ve Mekteb-i Sultani'de ve Mekteb-i Hukuk'da müretteb olan derslerden okumuş ise de ikmal-i tahsil etmemişdir. Türkçe kitâbet ve Arabi ve Kürdçe ve Fransızca tekellüm eder. Bin iki yüz toksan altı senesi cumadelulasının yedisinde [29 Nisan 1879] yirmi yaşında olduğu halde mülazemetle mefsûh Dersaadet Adliye Müfettişliği Otasına dâhil olarak dört mah kadar ifa-yı hidmetle toksan yedi senesi cumade'lahiresinin on beşinde [25 Mayıs 1880] beş yüz elli guruş maaş ile Gazhaneler Baş Kitâbetine memur ve üçyüz senesi muharremi evailinde [1882] bi'l isitfa münfasıl olub bir sene kadar açıkda kaldıkdan sonra aidatla Kudüs-i Şerif Sancağı Sertahsildarlığına ta'yîn olunmuş ise de on gün mürûrunda umum tahsildarlıkların lağvı hasebiyle işe başlamaksızın yine açıkda kalmışdır.

Ber vech-i muharrer bulunduğu üzere mêmûriyetlerden lağv ve istifâ sûretleriyle infisâl ederek umûr-ı memuresinden dolayı taht-ı mahkemeye alınmış ve mütehhem olmamışdır. Kudüs-i Şerif Sancağı mutasarrıflığından yazılan mülâhazada işbu tercüme-i hal varakası muvaffak nefs'ül emr olub mumaileyh ashâb-ı dirâyet ve kifâyetden bulunduğu tasdîk ve intihâb-ı mêmûriyet komisyonundan 'alada olunan mutalada dahi mumaileyh Hasan Beyin livâ-i mezkûr dâhilinde vâkî' Halil'ülrahman Kazası Kaymakamlığına mêmûriyeti derdest-i arz ve istizân olacağı tensik(?) olunmuşdur. Fi 25 Cumade'lahire 305 ve 25 Şubat 1303

Appendix C: Sicill-i Ahvâl Record of Yusuf Kamil Bedirxan (BOA, DH.SAİD 76/1011)

Yusuf Kamil Efendi Bedirhan Paşa merhumun mahdumudur. Bin iki yüz seksan dört sene-i hicriyesinde " (x) 1282" [1867/68] Dersaadetde tevellüd eylediği nüfûs-i tezkire-i Osmaniyesi sûret-i marufesinde muharrerdir. Mekteb-i Sultani'de Tükçeden - Dördüncü ve Fransızcadan üçüncü sınıfında olduğu halde terk eylediği mekteb-i mezkûr müdirinin tezkire-i cevabiyesinde mündericdir. Arabi ve Kürdçe tekellüm ve Türkçe ve Fransızca tekellüm ve kitâbet eylediği tercüme-i hal varakasında mesturdur. Bin üç yüz iki senesinde [1884/85] şehremanet Celilesi Terceme Kalemine mülazemetle bin üç yüz altı senesi muharreminin yedisinde "Eylül 1304" [13 Eylül 1888] üç yüz guruş maaş ile Şam-ı Şerif Mekteb-i İdadi-i Mülkiye Fransızca muallimliğine memur ve Marif Nezâret-i Celilesince yerine diğeri ta'yîn olunmasından naşi sene-i merkume cumadelulasının onunda "(x) Kânun-i evvel 1304" [12 Ocak 1889] münfasal olub sene-i mezkûre cumadelahiresinin on ikisinde "1 Şubat 304" [13 Şubat 1889] istifâ-i infisâl ederek sene-i merkume zi'lkaddesinin on dördünde "9 Haziran 1307" [12 Temmuz 1889] bin guruş maaş ile Trabzon Vilâyetinde Fatsa Kazası [kayma]kamlığına ta'yîn ve üç yüz tokuz senesi şevvalinin yirmi birinde "6 Mayıs 308" [19 Mayıs 1892] bin iki yüz guruş maaş ile vilâyet-i müşarileyhada Bafra Kazası Kaymakamlığına nâkil olunub (x) mêmûriyetini hüsn-i ifada ikdam ve mesaisine mebni bin üç yüz on bir senesi zi'lhiccesinin on birinde [15 Haziran 1894] uhdesine rütbe-i râbia tevcih buyrulmuş ve Bafra'dan kaldırılması lüzumu olbabda mefsuh intihâb mêmûriyet komisyonundan tanzim olunub celb ile mutala'a olunan 6 (x) 312 tarih ve üçyüz altmış sekiz numerolu mazbatada gösterildiği cihhetle ve sebk eden istilama cevaben tahvil-i mêmûriyet talebinde bulunduğu kendi tarafından izbar olunmuş ise de hüsn-i idaresi cihhetiyle terfien bir mahale nakli Trabzon Vilâyeti'nden işar kılınması üzerine bin üç yüz on dört senesi rebiülahirinin sekizinde "5 Ağustos 1312" [16 Eylül 1896] yine bin iki yüz elli guruş maaş ile Ankara vilâyeti muzafatından Akdağ Kazası Kaymakamlığına terfi' olunur(?). Tercüme-i Hal varakası Bafra Kaymakamı iken tanzim ve i'ta eylemesi cihhetiyle Canik Sancağı Mutasırrıfıyla Trabzon Vilâyeti Valiliğinden yazılan mülhâzalarda işbu tercüme-i hal varakası ahvâline ve mündericatı sıhhati muvaffak olub kendüsü erbab-ı ehliyet ve kifâyetden olduğu tasdîk kılınmışdır. Şam-ı Şerif Mekteb-i İdadi Mülkiyesi ve Hayfa Kız Mekteb Rüşdiyesi Fransızca muallimliklerinde müddet-i istihdâmıyla esbâb-ı infisâl ve ifa-yı hüsn-i hidmet eylediği Suriye Vilâyeti Maarif Heyeti'nin 30 Teşrin-i evvel 303 [11 Kasım 1887] tarihli iki kıta mazbatasının sûret-i musaddakalarına ve Fatsa Kaymakamlığı'nda müddet-i mêmûriyetiyle emvâl-i miriyye ve hukuk-ı şahsiyeden zimmet ve ilişkisi ol[ma]dığı ve takrir-i asayiş ve tahsilât-ı emr mühiminde ibrâz-ı ehliyetle hoşnudi-i umumi kazandığı ve Bafra Kaymakamlığına nakli Canik Sancağı mahâlî idarenin "10 Eylül 308" [22 Eylül 1892] tarihli mazbatası sûret-i musaddakasına ve Fatsa ve Bafra Kaymakamlıkları maaş-ı mülga intihâb-ı memurin komisyonu riyasetinin Kânun-i evvel 1310 tarihli tezkire-i cevabiyesine ve tarih ve mahal ve numerolu nüfûs-ı

tezkire-i Osmaniyesi sûret-i musaddakasına ve Mekteb-i Sultanideki müddet-i tahsili mekteb-i mezkûr müdiriyetinin 28 şubat 1311 tarihli tezkire-i cevabiyesine ve rütbe-i râbianın tevcihi tarihi ve Akdağ Kaymakamlığına tarih-i nakl-i mêmûriyeti ile esbâb-ı nakli komisyona tebliğ buyurulan iradat-ı seniye-i hazret-i paytahti kuyudatına tatbik edilmişdir. Mumaileyhin tercüme varakasında bin üç yüz altı senesi muharreminin yedisinde "1 Eylül 1304" iade-i mêmûriyet olarak beş yüz guruş maaş ile Şam-ı Şerif Mekteb-i İdadi mülkiyesi muhasebe kitâbetine memur ve bin üç yüz yedi senesi muharreminin on altısında "21 Ağustos 1305" bi'l istifâ (x) olduğu muharrer olub gerçi kitâbet-i mezkûreden tolayı zimmet ve ilişkisi olmadığı Suriye Vilâyeti meclis idaresinin 10 Temmuz 306 tarihli mazbatası sûret-i mudaddakasından münfehim olmuşise de müddet-i istihdâmıyla (x) maaş ve sebeb-i infisâline dair müracaat olmadığı gibi Şam-ı Şerif İdadi ve Rüşdi Mektebleri ve Fransızca muallimliklerine mahsûs maaş-i (x) dahi olbabda ki mahâlî mazbatalarında musarrah olmadığından keyfiyetin Maarif Nezâret-i Celilesi Sicill-i ahvâl şubemizden izah edilmişdir. 17 Receb 1316 / 19 Teşrin-i sani 1314[1 Aralık 1898]

Mumaileyhin maaşı bin üç yüz on dört senesi şevvalinin tokuzunda "1 Mart 1313" (x) bin yüz yirmi beş guruşa tenzil etmişdir. Mumaileyh Dâhiliye Nezâret-i Celilesinden vâkî olan işar ve mêmûriyet-i mülkiye komisyonundan verilen karar üzerine bin üç yüz on beş senesi muharreminin dördünde "22 Mayıs 313" [5 Haziran 1897] bin beş yüz yetmiş beş guruş maaşla Kastamonu Vilâyetinde Düzce Kazası Kaymakamlığına nakl edilmişdir.

Mumaileyhin tebdîli lazım gelmesine mebni dâhiliye Nezâret-i Celilesinden rafi' olan işar ve memurin-i mülkiye komisyonundan verilen karar üzerine ve bi'l istizân şeref talik buyrulan irade-i seniye hazret-i hilafetpenahi mucebince bin üç yüz on altı senesi cemaziyelevvelinin yirmi birinde "26 Eylül 314" [8 Ekim 1898] yerine diğeri ta'yîn buyrulmuşdur.

(...)

Appendix D: The Letter of Sheikh Ubeydullah to an Unknown Person
Y.PRK.AZJ 6/118 1299 (1880)

Nur-i Çeşmim ve Kurre-i Basirem

Eğer bu tarafın ahvâlini su'al ederseniz (x) cümlemiz ve kâffe-i ehl-i beytimiz sağ ve salimdir. Eğer ihbârâtdan su'al ederseniz muhakkak Devlet-i Osmaniye İran Devletiyle Kürdistan'ın izmihlâl ve istisali hakkında müttefik olmuşlardır. Inâyet-i hakdan ümid eylerim ki hüda-i teali anlara tevfik vermez. Muhakkak bilesiz ki her iki tarafdan verilen têminat ve söylenilen mülayim ve maslahat-amiz sözler cümleten kizb ve dürugdur. Her iki tarafın garezi Kürdistanı iğfal eylemektir. Sine Vilâyeti Valisi Şehzade'ye Tahran'dan keşide olunan telgrafname sûretinden vaz' ve müsteban olduğu vechle bunlar emellerine istihsal içun fırsat bekleyorlar. Ve Sine tarafından tarafıma irsal olunan mezkûr telgrafname sûretini leffen size gönderiyorum ki (x) açıb mutaalasıyla tarafının efkâr-ı habîsesi neden ibaret olduğunu anlayasız ve Hacı Sa'di canibinden taraf-ı daiyaneme varid olan mektubu aynen size irsal eyledim. Hülasa-i kelâm muhakkak bilesiniz ki Acem'in, Devlet-i Osmani'yenin iane ve muzaheretinden başka bir melce' ve penahi yokdur ve hudud boyuna vurud ve tahşid iden cünud-i Osmaniye mahza İran'ın istihsal-i mutalebatı içündür. Ve'l halete hazeh(?). İş öyle bir merkeze gelmişdir ki her cihhetce sa'i ve gayret lazımdır. Evvelen elbette sed elbette eşhâs-ı memure-i aliye politika hususunda beher sûretle olur ise olsun vas' ve iktidarın yetdiği mertebe kusur etmeye gör. Eğer onların hükmüyle devlet-i Osmaniye asâkiri hududdad geri çeker ise fehm-ül meram veyahud kendülüklerinden Kürdistan içun bir bina ihsan vaz' ederler ise pek alâ ve eğer hüda-negerde her tarafdan meyus olursanız o halde Kürdistan'ın ittifâkından başka çare yokdur. Bu hususda ne sûretle olur ise olsun Kürdistan ittifâkına sa'y ve gayret edilmelidir. Elinizden geldiği kadar ol taraflarda hafiyen bu babda sa'y-ı baliğ eyleyin. Eğer Mella Fehim hazretleri orada ise İran'ın devlet-i Osmaniye ile ittihâd ve ittifâk eyledğini münâsib ve maslahat görür isen mumaileyhe ifşa et. Zira Korkulur ki hükümet memurlarının mülayimane sözlerine ve sahte nevazişlerine emniyet ederek muğfel olur. Artık ehl-i hükümetden emniyet bil külliye salib olduğunu mumaileyh yakinen bilmelidir. Eğer bunlar fırsat bulurlarsa gerek bu daileri ve gerek kâffe-i rüesâ-i Kürdistan hakkındaki mesafiratlarını icra itmek isterler binaen (x) a'dayı def' ile kendimizi muhâfaza eylemekden başka çare kalmamışdır ve işte bu sebebe mebni eğer Molla Fehim orada ise serien geru dönülüb ol taraf ahâlîsini birleşdirmeye sa'i baliğ etmelidir ki ol tarafın bütün ahâlî ve aşâirini bu tarafa getüre. Her gün etrafıma hayli mikdâr asker tecmi' etmektedir ve hatta bugünlerde ikiyüz nefer kadar Bradostlar gelub bize iltihak etmişlerdir ve hayli kesan dahi peyderpey gelmek üzeredir. Sakın kendümüzden gâfil olmayalım. Bağdad Vilâyeti Meclis-i Mabeyn Katibi Derviş Efnedi bugünlerde Revanduza gelmişlerdir. Aşâiri teftiş ediyor ve halkı dailer ile ihtilât etmemek üzere aldatmaya çalışıyor. Merkum asâkir-i İraniye'nin vürûduna müterfiken daima İran tarafına medd-i enzâr intizar etmektedir. Ve Merkum istiyor ki asâkir-i merkume Soma ve Bradostu zabt ve istila eylesunlar. Asâkir-i Osmaniye Kürdistan üzerine hareket etmiş ve üzerimize elini atmış biz ise hanemizde gâfil oturuyoruz elbette ve elbette size tavsiye eylediğim adamlardan başka kesan ile ihtilât eyleme ve Molla Fehim hafiyen ahâlîyi celb ve tecim itmek içun müzâkere ve müşavere iderek ve'l hasıl maslahatın emniyetine mebni rehâvet etmeyub iş daha ziyade kesb-i (x) itmezden evel çaresini bulmalıdır.

Appendix E: The letter of the Abdurrezzak Bedirxan to the Kurdish tribal leaders DH.SYS. 24/2-4 (1330.6.25)

Şikak Tâifesi Reisi Azizim İsmail Ağa ve Cihangirzade Teymur Ağa zide-mecduhum Burada Osmanlı Şehbenderi[Burada iki kelime okunamamışdır] Şimdilik Rus devlet-i fehimiyesi ve baş konsoloshanesinde misafir bulunuyorum. Bilmiş olunuz ki harekat-ı zalimanesi müşahede edilen bir devlet-i İslamiyenin terkiyle, İslam olmasa bile diğer bir devletin penahına ilticâ caiz ve şer'en vacibdir. Mal ve canımızın muhâfazası uğrunda ne yapmak lazım gelirse icra edelim. Zira Devlet-i Osmaniye'nin zimam-ı umûrunu yed-i idarelerinde tutan vükelâ ve eşhâs sizce daha ziyade malum olduğu üzere farmason ve Kâfîrdiler. Kâfîr ile 'amil ve İslam haini olan bu vükelânın tedmiri içun mâl ve canımızı bilâ-teredüd feda-yı merdane ve gayur-ane sai etmez isek kasem iderim ki bizlerde namus kalmamış demekdir. Şayan-ı teesüfdür ki bazı kimseler aba ve ecdadının mesleğini terk ederek şeyh ve mürşid kuvvesiyle ehl-i mezheb-i Muhammed'in ağavatını maksad-ı şahsiyesine hadim idub bu uğurda İstanbul farmasonlarını nezdlerinde muhâfaza ederek Kürdistan'ın pa-mal olmasına çalışıyorlar. Ez cümle Şeyh Taha İttihâd ve Terakkî Fırka-i melunanesinin tahrik ve teşvikiyle ve hakikatde Rusya taraflarına tasarruf fikriyle ve bir cemiyetle Mir-Gevare(?) gelmişdir. İşte bunun için size yazıyorum ki Teymur ağa ile ittfak ederek kuvve-i müttehidenizle Şeyh Taha'nın bu tarafa hareketine mümana'at ediniz. Ne Rusya Devleti fahimesi ve ne de bizler Seyid Taha'nın bu harekatına razı değiliz. Seyid Taha'ya yardım etmemesi içun Mehmet Şerif ve Ömer Ağa'ya yazdığım hususi mektubları tarafınıza gönderdim. Sizi beyninizde ittihâd ve ittifâka davet eden evvelki evâmir ve (x) burada tekrar ediyorum ve (x) mektubları Mehmed Şerif ve Ömer Ağalara yetişdiriniz. Biz Rus devleti fahimesiyle ittihâd ve ittifâk üzere olalım inşallah cenab-ı hakkın (x) bizmledir. Huda'nın fazılı ve secaat ve ömrümüz sayesinde Türklerin husul-ü maksadına meydan bırakmayacağız. Cümlenize daima ihda-i güldeste-i selam ederim.

Emiriniz

Abdurrezzak Bin Necib Bedirxan

Appendix F: The letter of Yusuf Kamil Bedirxan to the Kurdish tribal leaders DH.ŞFR 453/111, 15 Aralık 1914

Dâhiliye Nezâret-i Celilesine

Bedirhani Kamil Bey'in Kürd rüesâsına tevzi' itdiği beyannamelerden bir danesi Haydaranlı Hüseyin Paşa tarafından vilâyete gönderildi. Aynen arz ediyorum. Hüseyin Paşa bu beyannamelerin Ermenicesinin de tevzi' edildiğini yazıyor. Rüesâ-i aşâirden bir takımlarının Rus âmâlına hidmetleri bir takımlarının Ruslara iltihakı zararları vesair rezaletleri hep bu halet-i ruhiyenin taht-i tesirindedir. Binaen 'aleyh ilerude şu hesabı rüesâ-i Ekrad'dan sormak mecburiyetinde bulunduğumuzu arz eylerim.

Vali Tahsin

Sûret

Bi'l cümle Kürd vatandaşları, hayr-ı hahane bir hitab-ı muhterem vatandaşlar.

Jön Türk hükümeti memurinin iğfalatına zinhar kapılmayınız. Rus devlet-i fahimesinin orduları halâskâr bir ordudur. Jön Türk hükümeti bunca zamandan beri hakkınızda reva gördüğü mezalim-i itisafane artık nihayet verecekdir. Heman bizlere inkiyad edin. Can ve mal [ve] ırzınız her dürlü taaruzdan masundur. Cevami-i iman-ı(?) dinimize daima ihtiram olunacaktır. Elbette ben de General hazretlerinin refakatinde bulunuyorum. Jön Türk hükümetine inkiyad icab etmez. Karîben mahvları muhakakdır. Milel-i gayr-i müslim[in] can ve mâl ve ırzları her dürlü taaruzdan masun kalmalıdır. Jön Türk memurin-i hükümeti şimdiye kadar olduğu gibi sizi onlara tecavüz etdirmeleri melhuzdur. Zinhar aldanmayınız. Muhterem Rus orduları Karîben oraları kamilen işgal edeceklerine şüphe etmeyiniz. Hıristiyanlara tarafınızdan tecavüz olacağı halde mütecaviz ve (x) şediden cezaye olunacaklarına emin olunuz. (x) hayr-ı hahanem dâiresinde hazır olunacağı takdîrde Rus imparatoru hazretleri sarfından Kürdlere istiklâliyet ihsan buyurulacakdır. Bitlis hadisesi üzerine medhaldar olmayan sadat ve meşaihimiz haliyen idam olundular. Türklere hidmet ederseniz elinize birşey geçmez. [Burada bir cümle okunamadı] Bu fırsatı fevt etmeyiniz. Aksi takdîrde Kürd milleti mahv olacakdır. Sonra nedâmet edersiniz. İş işden geçer. Baki cümlenize selam ider. Cenab-ı hakdan karîben mülâkât temenni ederim.

Appendix G: The telegraph of the notables about the Elections of 1912
DH.SYS. 24/2-4 (16 Mart 1328/ 29 Mart 1912)

Dâhiliye Nezâret-i Celilesine

26 Şubat 327 zeyldir. Makamata arz ve matbuatla neşr etdirilmesi istidasıyla Pervari ulema ve eşrafı tarafından yazıldığı Siird mutasarıflığından işar ve tebliğ olunan telgrafname sûreti zire naklen arz olunur.

16 Mart 328

Bitlis Valisi

Ahmed Nedim

Sûret

Bedirhanzâdelerin otuz bin Kürd namına Hürriyet ve İtilaf Cemiyetine mürâcaatla Şubeler teşkili zımnında program taleb eyledikleri evrak-ı hevadisde münderic olduğu mesmu'muz olmuşdur. Biz Kürd Kavmi Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkasından bu güne kadar haberimiz olmadığı gibi mezkûr cemiyetle hiçbir sûretle münasebet ve alaka peydasına katiyen bir fikr ve arzumuz yokdur. Mücahede-i dilirane ve azm-ı vatanperveraneleriyle millet-i Osmaniye'ye otuz bu kadar sene bargıran-ı şiklet altında olduğu kabus-ı istibdaddan kurtararak pürr-i hürriyetin ağuş-ı müşfikanesine isal eden İttihâd ve Terakkî Cemiyeti hatırımızda (…) şükran (…) kalbimizde sermesdi bir cay-ı (…) ihtiram kazanmışdır. Bütün samimiyet ve mevcûdiyetimizle merbut olduğuğumuz (…) millete afaka-i hayata sebeb-i yegane bildiğimiz İttihâd ve Terakkî Cemiyet-i naciyesinden bizi hiçbir zat, bir kuvvet ve âmâl ayıramaz. Mumaileyhin ve evrak-ı havadisin bu badaki neşriyatını katiyen tekzib ve İttihâd ve Terakkî cemiyetine aid safvet ve hulûsumuzu teyiden arz eyleriz.

Appendix H: The Telegraph of the Bedirxanis to the Committee of Union and Progress DH.SYS. 100/4 (1331.8.4)

Telgrafname-i vilâyetpenahi mutala‘a-güzar-ı çakeranemiz oldu. İbtidai Meşrutiyetden beri İttihâd ve Terakkî Cemiyeti’nin aile-i Bedirhaniye reva gördüğü ihanetler kabl-i ta’dad değildir. Bugün bu hesabı görecek değiliz. Çünkü vatan-ı azizimiz tehlikededir. Bu aile binlerce Kürd vatandaşlarıyla muharebe-i zailede feda-i can etdiği gibi şimdi de büyük mikyasda Kürd vatandaşlarıyla feda-yı cana vefatlarımızı seyelane mahya bir telgrafname vilâyetpenahinin “kanaatinde sabit oldukça kendülerine karşu hükümetin hiçbir sui nazarı olmayacağı” fıkrası cidden muceb-i teessüf ve telhifdir. Bu fıkrada halen hükümetin ailemize emin olmadığı anlaşılıyor. Aile-i Bedirhani ise sebat ve metanetle himmet ile müştehir bir ailedir. Gönüllü cemine dair olan emre muntazırız. Hüseyin Paşa’nın Kırşehir mutasarıflığı meselesine gelince; çokdan beri mevcûd valilerden ziyade valilikle kesb-i istihkak etmiş iken devr-i istibdadda gördüğü mezalim-i şedide ve işkencelere terdifen hükümet-i hazıra tarafından dahi mahvı içun bilâ muceb envai müfteriyat ve mezalim tertib ve tasni edilerek hukuk-u medeniyesinden mahrum edilmiş ve mêmûriyet taleb olduğu zamanlar istidaları battal torbalarında hıfz ediliyor idi. Şimdi ise mêmûriyete bir taleb ve istirhâmı olmadığı halde şu tevcihi bir nimet-i ‘uzema şeklinde gösterilerek tenzil-i (x) mezkûr mutasarrıflığa ta‘yîni mehza vatandaşlardan cüda etmek fikriyle tertib edilmiş bir ‘adem-i itimad eseri değil midir? Binaen ‘aleyh Kırşehir mutasarıflığı sarf-ı adem-i inad ve ihanet mahza bilerek kabul etmediği maruzdur.

Bedirhani zade

Süleyman, Kamil, Hasan, Hüseyin

Appendix I: The Decissions taken in the Meeting of Kurdish Committee in 1914

DH.EUM.EMN 74/21 (1332.C.29)

Van Vilâyetinden mürûr 8 Mayıs 1330 şifre telgrafnamenin sûretidir.

Abdurrezzak'ı Rusya'dan avdetle Hoy'da Rusya Konsolosu Çirkof'un riyaseti altında şaki Simko, Said Bey, Arusanlı Hasan Ağa Seyyid Taha'nın vekili Mecid vesaireden terekküb eden Kürd Kongresinde bulunarak mukarrerât-ı atiye ittihâz kılınmış.

Birincisi, Bitlis vakası Kürde fikr-i ihtilâli gösterdiğinden ve şeyhlerin idamı, Kürd efkârında intikam uyandırdığından, bu vakadan bi'l istifâde umumi bir hareket icrasına tevassül edilmesi.

İkincisi, Bu maksad içun Ruslardan tedarik edilmiş 500 mükerrer ateşli eslihânın Said, Simko, Cihangir, Hacı Kulihan nam rüesâ-yı eşkıya bi't tevzi ind'el icab birleşmek üzere müteaddid çeteler teşkili ve dâhile sevki.

Üçüncüsü, Hükümet-i seniye tarafdarı görünen rüesâ-yı ekradın itlâfı,

Dördüncüsü, Bitlis vaka'sının esbâb-ı tekvinini ve şeyhlerin idamı ve ıslâhatın kabul ve sûret-i eşkalini mübeyyin matbu risaleler neşri ve sailer vasıtasıyla dâire-i hükümete tamimi.

Beşincisi, Hudud bölüklerinin ve bilhassa müfreze karagollarının basılarak eslihânın gasbı ve askerin kuvve-yi maneviyesinin de kesr ile, Kürtlüğe cereyan uyandırılması ve tedricen dâhile doğru tevsi'-i dâire-i şekavet edilmesi.

Altıncısı, Ermenilere, Nasturrilere katiyen ilişilmemesi, hükümetin doğrudan doğruya hedef ittihâzı.

Appendix J: The Telegraph of Tribal Leaders to the Liberal Entente

DH.SYS, 83-2/2-13, (1330.5.20)

Siird'den Hürriyet ve Îtilaf Fırkası Riyasetine varid olan telgrafnamedir

Siird Belediye reisinin mutasarıffa yazdığı tezkirede mebus-ı sabık Abdürrezzak Efendi'nin İttihâd ve Terakkî Cemiyeti namına namzedliği vaz' eylediğinin kaza-i nevahiye ilanıyla intihâb ittirilmesi içun icab edenlere tebligât-ı şedide ifasını beyan ediyor. Merkez vilâyetin Muş, Genç sancaklarında intihâbat hatim bulmaktadır. Burada ki tezahürata karşu intihâbatın şimdiye kadar tehir-i esbâbı tezahür etdi. Livâmızı ihtiva eden dört kaza ve merkez müntahibleri menafi'-i vataniye hadim Bedirhani Hüseyin Paşa'yı intihâb ediyoruz. Bu hakları millete aidiyeti mukkades kânun-i esasimiz têmin etmişdir. Müşarünileyhanın gayretine intihâb olunacak mebus milletin olmayub nüfuz-ı hükümetle intihâb edilmiş memurinin mebusudur. Memurin-i hükümetin kânun şikanane tehdidatına milletin artık tahammülü kalmamışdır. Şu mâruzâtımızda nazardan dur tutularak memurinin kânuna rücu' têmin buyurulmaz ise milletin her dürlü fedakarlığı ihtiyar ile esaret-i vakayı ref'e çalışacağı arz şu mâruzâtımızın liecl'ül iştihâd enzâr-ı millete vaz'ını istirhâm eyleriz

İsmail

Siird Eşrafı namına Mehmed

Abdülkerim

Siird namına Mahmud

Süleyman

Abdullah

Siird Namına meşaih Saaddedin

Diğer İmzalar.

Appendix K: Other Quotes in Turkish

Document 1: Y.PRK.BŞK 1/58 (1295.L.0)

Bedirhan Paşazade Osman Beyle Cizre Telgrafhanesi Vasıtasıyla olunan muharebat sûretidir.

S. Maksadınız Telgrafınızdan güzelce anlaşılmıyor. İzahat ita buyurmanız içun makine başına celbinize lüzum görülmüşdür.

C. İrade-i devletimiz üzere makine başında emr-i seniyelerine muntazırım.

S. İstediğiniz mêmûriyet ne tarz ve sıfatda olmasını arzu buyurursunuz?

C. Çakeriniz matbu-i müfehimmin en aşağı mêmûriyetleriyle iftihâr ederim. Onun içun de pek çok fedakarlıklarda bulundum ise de gadrdan başka bir şeye malik olamadım. Onun içun hanedanımza itibar eden Ekrad taifesinin içinde ikamet etmeyi iftiyar eyledim.

S. Şu ifâdeniz (x) telgrafınızdan anlaşılmışdı. Şimdi Sizden sualmiz istediğiniz mêmûriyetin tarz ve sıfatıdır. Yani şu mêmûriyet ne nam ve ünvânı ve ne makule vezâife şâmil olmak lazım gelecekdir?

C. Her ne layık görülüyor ise cakeriniz min gayr-i haddin ona razıyım fakat ahâlînin bendenize olan hüsn-i niyetlerinden dolayı ne mêmûriyetle burada kalacağımı cümlesi ba telgraf canib-i vilâyetpenahilerine arz edeceklerdir.

Document 2: Y.PRK.BŞK 1/58 (1295.L.0)

Mir-i Merkumdan 12 Teşrin-isani 94 tarihli gelan telgraf sûretdir.

Kürdistan'ın hiçbir tarafında matlûbât-ı mîriyye icra olunmuyor. Ahâlî ise bendenize fevkalade itaatleri vardır. Devlet-i müfehhim tarafından Kürdistan kıta'sına çakerleri memur olur isem kâffe-i matlûbât-ı mîriyyeyi der uhde iderim. Ve ahâlîde memurinin zulm ve têdibinden vikaye edilmiş olur. Ekrad ise bunun maadasına ruy-ı rıza gösteremiyorlar. Daha münâsibi var ise mütevakkıf-i rey-i efhemileridir.

Document 3: Y.PRK.BŞK 1/58 (1295.L.0)

Huzur-ı Ali Hazret-i Sadaretpenahiye

Bedirhan Paşa merhum Bohtan kıtasından hareket eylediği günden şimdiye kadar kazalarımızda bulunan emvâl-i mîriyye ve kura ve tekalif-i saire layıkıyla tahsil ve tesviye olunamadığından her gün (x) ve garat ve katl-ı nüfus gitgide artmaktadır. El hasıl zalimlerin zulmlerinden dolayı bir köyden diğer köye gitmek gayr-ı kâbil ve memurlarımızın irtikablarından tolayı ifal-i merkume-i mezkûrenin hiçbir yerde önü alınamadığı bizlerce muhakkakdır. Ve ahvalimiz bu merkezde durdukça bizlerin izmihlanine ve devletimizin mazarrat-ı kesiresine badi olacağı bi- iştibahdır. Şimdi ise adil ve 'adâleti cümlemizce malum ve müsellem olan Bedirhan Paşa mahdumu Osman Nureddin Bey bu tarafda bulunub vaka'ül mezburenin refiyle emniyetimizin mumaileyhin devletimiz tarafından Bohtan'da bir mêmûriyetle bulundurulmasına mütevakıfdır. Ve iş bu mazbata-i maaruzamız üzerine cümlemiz tekalif-i mîriyyeyi vaktinde icra eylemesine taahüd ederiz. Zira cümle aşâir ve kabâil mir-i mumaileyhin zir-i yedinde olub bu cihhetle biran evvel icra-ı mêmûriyetine dair kâffemiz bir lisanda olarak merhamet ve 'adâlet-i padişahiye dehalet eyleriz. Olbabda ve her halde emr 'u ferman hazret-i men leh'ül emrindir efendimiz.

13 Teşrin-i Sani 94

İmzalar

Document 4: Ahmed Macid, Kürdistan Ahvâli ve Mesele-i Islâhat, Mülkiye, no: 8 (1 Eylül 1325).

Muş sancağının sekene-i asliyesi olan (Tevaif-i Ekrad) asırlardan beri aşîret ve bedavet halinde müte‘ayyiş bir kavm-ı kadim olub, gerçi Kürdlerin medeniyete kâbiliyetsizlikleri iddia ve isbat olunamaz ise de bu havali merkez devlete ba‘id olduğundan ve ahâlîsinin terbiye-i efkârını ve mülkün ıslâh ve imarını têmin iden vesait-i temdiniyeye tevessül olunamayub nas-ı hal-ı tabi‘yesinde bırakıldığından huşunet ve hususiyyet hallerini muhâfaza etmişlerdir. Ahâlî-yi asliyeyi teşkil eden kurâ halkı, hâl-i vahşete karib bir cehalet-i mutlak içinde puyan olub, hukuk-ı tabî‘îye-yi beşeriye ve sıfat-ı farika-i insaniyeden külliyen bi-haber olduklarından tegalüben yahud aba ve ecdadından tevarüsen (Beğlik) ve (Ağalık) nam ve kuvvetini elde etmiş olanların zebun tahakkümatıdırlar.

(…)

Bir de Kürdler tabî‘en atıl olub çalışmazlar ve çalışmak istemezler. Binaen’aleyh edvar-ı sabavet ve tufuliyyetini her dürlü terbiye-i fikriye ve ahlakiyeden mahrumen atâlet ve rehâvet içinde geçirerek ve etrafında fena fena misaller görerek ahd-ı şebaba erişmiş bir köy delikanlısı içun silahını eline almak, fişenkliğini beline kuşanmak bir muvaffâkiyet, eşkiyalığa çıkmak ise bâdî-i mefharetdir. Onun zinetli kıyafeti libas-ı şekavet gaye-i emeli ise adam öldürmekde göstereceği cesâretdir.

Document 5: Ahmed Macid, "Kürdistan Ahvâli Ve Mesele-i Islâhat," *Mülkiye*, no. 10 (1 Teşrin-i Sani 1325), p. 12-13

Efrâd-ı millet (mektebde) okuyacak, şoseler üzerinde seyahat edecek, görecek, öğrenecek, çalışacak, kazanacak, kesbine sahib ve malik olacak. Nik ve bedi temyiz, kâr û gezendi takdir, ahlakça terakki edecektir. (Hukuk-ı şahsiye ve insaniye), (vezâif ictimaiye) bilinecek, cüz'ün külle nisbeti gibi nafi'-ı 'ammın, menfaat-i hassaya rüchanı ve menfaat-i zatiye-i aherin ızrarıyla hasıl olacağı fikrinin butlânı idrak olunarak (ebna-yı cins)in izrar ve iğfaline değil (mütekabilen istifade) kaidesine tabiyetle istihsal-i refah haline çalışılacak; cüret, cesaret, faaliyet, ve metanet artacak, haysiyet, izzet-i nefs, şeref-i zati, hamiyet (vatanperverlik) anlaşılacak, dimağlar tevsi' ederek (düşünceler) değişecektir.

Ihtilâf-ı edyandan münbais ve âsar-ı cehalete mahsûs olan (muadat-ı kadime) terk olunarak onun yerine (vatandaşlık) his ve fikri kaimi bir toprakda yetişen insanların yekdiğerine hasm-ı can olamayub (düşman-ı sahih) olsa olsa (haric)de bulunabileceğine amme-i ahali kani' olacak müslim ve gayr-i müslim efrad-ı millet biri birine (kardaş) nazarıyla bakacak; cümlenin saadet hali ve ticaret istikbali içun yegane cihhet cami'a (Osmanlılık) olduğu cidden ve umumen anlaşılarak devletin teali-i miknet ve şevketi umum milletin (nahabe-ı amali) olacakdır.

Document 6: DH. İD, 3/81, (1331.R.20)

‘Alevi Kürd ırkına mensûb olan sekene-i mevcûdesi şimdiye kadar bir gûna nimet-i temeddün ve maârifden ve terbiye-i ictimâiyeden kati‘yyen behredar [faydalanmış] olamayarak daima bir vahşet ve cehalet içinde ve âdetâ hilkat-ı ademin ibtidâîlerinde kalmış ve yekdiğerinden çalmak ve çırpmakla têmin-i maîşeti bir san‘at ve ‘âdet edinmişlerdir.

(…)

İngilizlerin âhiren Sudan’daki têdibât ve ittihâz etdikleri tedâbir-i ıslâhiye her halde bizim içun de nazar-ı dikkate alınacak ve numûne-i emsâl add olunacak bir kaziyyede.

(…)

Oralarda meskun insanlar olsa olsa sene de bir iki defada tahsildâr ve jandarma yüzünü bir nazar-ı vahşet ve nefretle görebiliyorlar. Medeniyet, maîşet daha toğrusu insaniyet[in] ne demek olduğunu bilmezler. Rivâyât-ı mevşukeye nazaren daha içerülerinde adeta Afrika’nın akvâm-ı vahşiyesini andırır çırıl çıplak ot kökü ve meşe meyvesi ile geçinir ve sûretde beşer, siretde hayvan ıtlakına şayan bir takım insanlarda bulunurmuş.

Document 7: BOA, DH.SYS, 121/5, (1332.5.15

Dahiliye Nezâret-i Celilesine

Mührimâne

Devletlû Efendim Hazretleri

11 Şubat 329 Tarhili ve 88185/698 Numerolu tahrirat-i aliye-i nezâretpenahilerine cevâbdır. Hoy'da Abdurrezzak'ın teşvîki ve Rus Konsolosunun muavenetiyle Rusya tebasından bir Fransızın taht-ı idâresinde açılan leyli mektebden vilâyet-i acizi haberdar ve hatta Şaki Simko'nun nevahi-i şarkiye ve hudud haricindeki aşâir-i İslamiye evlâdlarını cebren ebeveynlerinden alarak bu mektebe idhal ve Rusca lisanıyla icra-yı tedrisat olunduğuna vakıfdır. Evvelce de arz olunduğu üzere bir memleket-i ecnebiyedeki bu gibi teşebbüsâtın meni' veya tadil-i mazarratına bab-i aliyece bir çare-i siyasiye teemmül ve icrası lazım olub yoksa vilâyet haricinde ve bi'l hassa diğer devletin zir-i tabiyetindeki mahaller ceryanlarını tebdil ve tadile vilâyet vas' ve imkan göremiyor. Evlâd-ı ekradı tedris ve nazarlarını hükümete tevcih içun bizim de o mekteb misüllü müessesat vücûda getirmek sureti bi't tabi varid-i hatır ve hatta (x) emel ise de varidat-ı hazine-i hususiyesiyle bu sene merkezdeki darülmuallimin kırk yataklık leyli mekteb haline kalbine pek güçlükle imkan bulan vilâyet bu kadar az tahsisat masrafıyla Kürdistan'ın iktiza eden nukatında böyle müesseseler vücûda getirememekde şimdilik muztardır. Binaen'aleyh hükümetce yapılacak şey Hoy'daki gibi mektebe mukâbil Mahmudi Hakkari, Gevar kazalarında üç leyli mekteb vücûda getirmek ve evlâd-ı Ekradı oraya toplayub kendilerine terbiye-i Islamiye ve milliye vermekden ibaretdir. Mevhum hükümet-i İraniye'ye karşı bab-i 'alinin yapacağı teşebbüsât-ı siyasiyeden de hiç bir netice çıkmayacağı emsal-i adidesiyle müsbetdir. Evkaf Nazırı Bey Efendi hazretleri bu suretle üç medrese-i ibtidaiye inşasını vaad buyurduklarından bunların (x) faale isaline delalet-i fehimaneleri ehhemiyetiyle müsterhemdir. Olbabda emr û ferman hazret-i men leh'ül emrindir.

Fi 18 Rebiyyülahir 332 ve Fi 3 Mart 330

Van Valisi

Tahsin

Document 8: DH.ŞFR, 424/15 (1330.N.2)

Vilayat-ı şarkiye ıslâhat meselesinin matbuata düşmesi her dürlü telkinât ve telakkiye müsaid olan Kürde nüfuz etti ve meşrûtiyet ile başlayan telkinât-ı teşebüsât yeniden tazelendi. Maktul Yüzbaşı Hayrettin'in harekât ve tazyikat-ı malumesi bu fikri pek alâ gösteriyor idi. Feodalizm icabı meşaih arasındaki tarikat ve menafi-i şahsiye ihtilafı rüesâ-i ekradı istenildiği zaman ve mekanda toplamaya mani olduğundan bu hissin hükümetsiz ve mesai-i muhitlerde Ermenistan'ın teşkili Kürdistan'ın avakıb eylemesinden hükümetin hıyanetinden bahisle tevhid-i efkâr ve silah tedariki içun mollalar ve ağalar vasıtasıyla telkinât[a] başlıyor idi. İşte Halife Selim ve Şeyh Şahabbeddin işte şu halet-i ruhiyenin doğurduğu şahıslardır"

Document 9: Kemal Süphandağ, *Büyük Osmanlı Entrikası Hamidiye Alayları* (Istanbul: Komal Yayınları, 2006)

Batvanlılar'ın hareketlerinin sebebi 8 Temmuz 1309 tarihli telgrafla arz edildiği şekilde, Bedirxan Paşazadeler den malum-i aliniz olan özel fikirleri saikasıyla, Hamidiye yüksek teşkilarını ihlal ve bu suretle, güya kendilerinin Kürdistan'da önemlerinin olduğunu ibraz etmek fikrinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Öteden beri de bizzat Batvanlılar arasında bulunmakta ve bunların Botan'dan bazı taraftarları ve mensubları var ise de, adı geçenlerin diğer aşiretler yanında asla bir ehemmiyetleri yokdur. Bunlar geçen sene yine hain bir fikir ile Botan tarafına geçmek üzere İran'dan geçerler iken, hududa girer girmez Hamidiye Süvari Ümerası tarafından yakalanmıştır.

Document 10: Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, p. 201

Arnawud jî weke we bêmekteb û bêmedrese bîn. Eve pêlek e ewan aqile xwe anî serê xwe, ji Xunkar re nivîsîn, mekteb û medrese dan çêkirin, zaruyen xwe rêdikin mekteba, ilmê tehsîl dikin. Lê ewan heta ew mekteb û medrese dan çêkirin qiyamet rakirin, çi qa zehmet kişandin! Divê un ji zehmetê natirsin. (…) Loma divê un qewî bixebitin, heta un bikaribin welatê xwe î'mar bikin.

Document 11: Bozarslan, ed., *Kurdistan, Rojnama Kurdî Ya Pêşîn - İlk Kürt Gazetesi 1898-1902*, p. 198-199

Gelî Kurdno! Carekê fekirin halên xwe û halen cîranê xwe Mosqof. Berî hezar sala Kurd çava bîn, îro disa we ne. Lê cîranên we xweymarîfet û sin'et bîne, xweydewlet bîne. Kurd jar u reben mane. Dewletên mezin hemi diwen Kurdistanê bidin Ermeniya. (…) Nuho dewleten mezinên Fila hemî dibêjin" çiku Kurd cahilin, bêmarifet in, kemhunerin heyfa Ermenîya ye binê destê wan bimînin; loma divê Kurdistan ya Ermenîya bit.

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Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ateşemiliterlik (Y.PRK.EŞA)
Esas Evrakı (Y.EE)
Hususi Maruzat (Y.A.HUS)
Hariciye Nezareti Maruzatı (Y.PRK.HR)
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Zaptiye Nezareti Tasnifi (ZB.)

Newspapers and Journals

İctihad
İkdam
Hetaw-i Kurd
Kürdistan (1898-1902)
Kürdistan (1909)
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